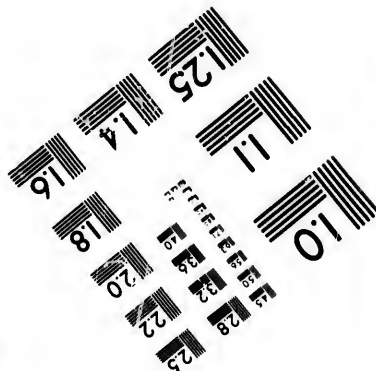


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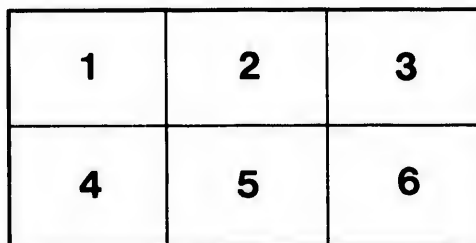
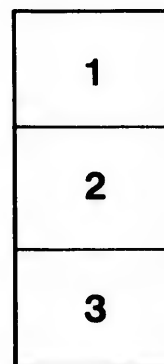
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**GLIMPSES OF THE MONASTERY :**  
A  
BRIEF SKETCH  
OF THE  
HISTORY OF THE URSULINES  
OF  
QUEBEC,  
DURING  
TWO HUNDRED YEARS.

---

BY A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY.

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FROM 1639 TO 1672 :

PART I.



QUEBEC :  
PRINTED BY C. DARVEAU.  
1875.

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J. M. J.

Angela.

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TO OUR DEAR MOTHER  
MARIE GUYART OF THE INCARNATION,  
FIRST SUPERIORESS,  
AND WITH  
MADAME DE LA PELTRIE,  
JOINT-FOUNDRESS OF THIS MONASTERY;  
THIS LITTLE SKETCH OF ITS HISTORY  
IS MOST HUMBLY AND  
AFFECTIONATELY  
DEDICATED.

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## PREFACE.

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A brief history of the Ursuline Convent of Quebec, during two centuries of its existence, is the object of these simple pages, offered to our English-reading friends.

The edification and delight afforded by the *Histoire du Monastère*, published in French, some years ago, (1863,-64) lead us to anticipate a favorable reception for the present sketch, portraying the vicissitudes that have passed over an Institution, whose origin is nearly coeval with the first attempts to colonize these wilds of America.

We have, for the most part, confined ourself to such facts and incidents as regard exclusively the Convent and its inmates; we relate the difficulties, the toils, the trials, which occasionally have fallen to the lot of our predecessors, ~~to behold;~~—convinced that there is no spectacle more encouraging, than to behold the servants of God, faithfully adhering to His holy will and accomplishing their duty with a cheerful heart, in adversity as well as in prosperity.

Our documents and books of reference have been the following :—

I. The Relations of the Jesuits, published during a period of forty years, and widely read in France, from 1632 to 1672 : as reprinted by the Canadian government, in 1858, they form three large octavo volumes.

II. The *Life* and Letters of Mother Mary of the Incarnation, first Superioress of the Ursuline Monastery in Quebec.

During the space of some thirty years, this admirable woman, in the interests of Religion and for the good of souls, entertained a vast correspondence with persons of various rank and condition in France, with different religious Communities, and especially with her son, who became a Benedictine monk, and who was, at one time, Superior of his Monastery.

A selection of these letters published by her son, after her death, forming a quarto volume of 672 pages, have just been reprinted in three octavo volumes, and are read with admiration.

III. The *Old Narrative*, or a relation of the events of the first half-century, written from memory after the conflagration of the Monastery (1686), in which the records of the early times

had perished. For the years subsequent to that epoch, we have had the regular cloistral Annals; the obituaries of the Nuns; fragments of letters that have escaped the destructive hand of time; registers, lists, &c.

We have been happy, also, to refer to the venerated Chaplain of the Monastery, Rev. G. L. Lemoine, at whose suggestion this work was commenced; and who by a careful study of all our documents, as well as by an attentive reading of the proof-sheets, has been enabled to lend us invaluable aid.

By no means do we desire to prepare the reader to expect a story of great and thrilling interest; but rather to claim indulgence for pages so poor, gleaned from so rich a source.

For our pupils, who remember the cloister as a little world where all was calm and pure; where piety mingled so naturally with science, and where no employment excluded the thought and the name of God, these "Glimpses of the Monastery," will doubtless possess a peculiar charm.

They will be happy to meet the oft-repeated name of our Venerable Mother Marie de l'Incarnation — and to listen anew to those "tales of the Olden Times," which were wont to make the social hour so pleasant.



Such reminiscences have a soothing and hallowed influence upon the mind amid the turmoil—the troubles perhaps, and sorrows—of life. In such a result the writer would feel her toil amply repaid; desiring above all to contribute, according to her humble capacity, to the glory of God and the good of her fellow-creatures.

URSULINE CONVENT, QUEBEC, 1875.

## GLIMPSES OF THE MONASTERY.

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### CHAPTER I.

(INTRODUCTORY.)

**1639.**

#### INSTRUCTION NEEDED IN NEW FRANCE.

Thirty years had elapsed since the attempt had been made to fix a permanent settlement upon the shores of the St. Lawrence. With no other neighbors for thousands of miles than savage hordes, the little Colony founded in 1608, would have been, for twenty years, merely a central post for the fur-traders, had it not been, above all, a refuge and a rallying point for the missions.

The illustrious founder of Quebec had mainly in view, "to plant in this country

the standard of the Cross; to teach the knowledge of God and the Glory of His Name; desiring to increase charity for His creatures." Hence, while providing for the spiritual welfare of his own people, he had not failed to invite missionaries, to come and labor for the conversion of the pagan Indians.

The call was accepted by the sons of St. Francis, as early as 1615. Ten years later, came the Jesuit missionaries, to share the labors, the perils, and the merits of the Recollects.

In 1629, the little Fort of Quebec was beleaguered, at once, by famine and by a hostile fleet. It was not a Strasbourg, surrendering with its army 300,000 strong;—it was simply the captivity of about fifty people;—but it annihilated, at one blow, the fruit of twenty years' labor and hardships, depriving the French monarch of his only foothold on the American continent, and plunging the poor Indian anew into the pagan darkness from which he was beginning to emerge.

Fortunately, the fleet which three years later brought back the White Flag, bore a more numerous colony than had been carried away. It restored also the missionary to his glorious toils.

The new colonists were not mere traders: they came provided with implements of agriculture; a few had brought their families to make this distant shore their home. The powerful Company of the Hundred Associates, moreover, were pledged to increase the number of immigrants to four thousand, before the end of ten years.

Such was the prospect the noble and devoted Champlain was given to contemplate, before closing his eyes upon the scenes of his long and arduous labors. His death, on Christmas day, 1635, filled with mourning his own countrymen, wherever they were scattered, throughout the land; the Indians also, wept the kind hearted Governor, whom they regarded with reverence and affection.

Another year brought, as Governor of

New France, the gallant De Montmagny, who continued the plans of his illustrious predecessor.

In his company, besides his officers and soldiers, were two noble families<sup>1</sup>, comprising forty-five persons; with workmen, artisans, and laborers, giving to the infant city a population of nearly two hundred souls.

The Fort was now enlarged, and partly built of stone; the streets of the city were traced. The Jesuit Mission-House having received reinforcements, a Residence was established also at Three-Rivers, where already the fur-traders had their post, frequented by the Indian hunters. Another Mission House was built in the distant country of the Hurons<sup>2</sup>; and there, in the midst of persecutors, was a little band of faithful converts.

The wandering Algonquin and Mon-

<sup>1</sup> Le Gardeur de Repentigny, and Le Neuf.

<sup>2</sup> 800 miles west of Quebec.

tagnais,<sup>1</sup> more docile than the Hurons, wherever they had met the Missionary, had received with joy the tidings of salvation.

<sup>1</sup> In the following pages, the names of the Indian tribes recurring frequently, we shall here indicate their locality.

North of the St. Lawrence wandered various tribes of the Algonquin type;—the Montagnais, along the Saguenay to Hudson's Bay; the Algonquin proper on the St. Lawrence and Ottawa; the Nipissings dwelt on the lake of that name; the Attimegues north of Three Rivers; Maine was occupied by the Abnakis; and Gaspé and N. Brunswick, by the Micmacs.

The south shore of the St. Lawrence, in Canada, had no fixed inhabitants.

The Hurons were an agricultural and sedentary tribe, inhabiting the peninsula formed by Lake Huron, the river Severn, and Lake Simcoe.

All these tribes were gained to the faith within the lifetime of the first missionaries.

The most barbarous, and yet the most advanced nation of the Continent, the Iroquois, occupied the centre of New-York, from the Hudson to the Genesee. The five principal cantons of the confederacy were the Mohawk, (*Agnier*), Oneida (*Onneyut*), Onondaga (*Onnontagué*) Cayuga, and Seneca.

An immense interest in the success of the missions and the welfare of the colonists, was awakened in all ranks of society in France, by the publication of the Relations, in which the holy missionaries made known the wonderful effects of grace in these new Christians, as well as the ardor of their own longings to shed their blood for the cause of God.

Princes and prelates, courtiers and ladies of rank, as well as pious persons in the humbler walks of life, vied with each other, in raising funds for the missions and other charitable purposes. One of these pious donations provided for the establishment of the converted Algonquins and Montagnais, on the model of the Reductions of Paraguay. Thus was commenced, in 1637<sup>1</sup>, the Christian village of Sillery.

<sup>1</sup> By Noël Brûlart de Sillery, prime Minister of Louis XIII. He renounced the world, and embraced the ecclesiastical state, in 1634. The remainder of his life was devoted to good works. *Relation. Bretony.*

There, at only four miles' distance from Quebec, were little Indian girls waiting to be instructed. Other little French maidens were growing up among the settlers, within and around the city. It is easy to imagine with what anxiety pious fathers and mothers looked upon their daughters, for whom it was impossible to procure the advantages of education and instruction. For their sons, these precious advantages were prepared in the college of the Jesuits, opened in 1635.

Had Divine Providence, while providing for the bird unfledged, rocking in its little nest, forgotten the birdlings of a Christian home? If left without intellectual and moral culture, would not the descendants of European civilization, sink to the level of the degraded beings around them, and become perhaps, more savage than the natives themselves?

But Providence had not forgotten the little ones in New France, as we shall soon see.



## CHAPTER II.

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### THE WAYS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

Far from these vast regions where the fearless missionaries labored, away in central France, the old city of Tours lay quivering in the sunlight of an April morning. It is not to the bright fields, the vine-clad hills, the pleasant thickets of mulberry trees, that we shall direct our gaze; but to the cloistered garden-walks of the Ursuline Monastery, along which one of the sisterhood glides, with joyous step, and kneels before the rustic shrine, "the Hermitage" of St. Joseph. If the sacred spot were less shaded we might have recognized the features, now so familiar to thousands on both sides of the Atlantic. It was Mother Mary of the Incarnation, hastening to thank St. Joseph for an immense favor. The long years of

waiting were over; the "amiable crosses of Canada" which promise her "the delights of Paradise," because there she will find an opportunity of "winning souls to God," are before her.

To many of our readers, the name of Mary of the Incarnation, is, already, a household word; perhaps there are none who have not heard something of the history of this remarkable woman,—the first teacher of female youth in Canada; the first, also, whose name, from this Northern America, has been carried to Rome, to be inscribed as a candidate for the highest honors upon earth.

Born, in 1599, of a family, not wealthy, but honorable, and distinguished for probity and virtue, Mary Guyart had the advantage of a solid and pious education, which, in itself a grace, disposes the faithful soul to be the recipient of other graces. The piety and innocence of her youth; the trials that attended her during the two years of her married life; the admirable virtues she practised during her

widowhood, while bringing up her infant son—the only tie that retained her in the world;—these would form the headings of as many chapters, replete with interest and edification. <sup>1</sup>

At length, after twelve years have brought her son beyond the helplessness of infancy, she confides him to her sister's care, and enters the cloister. These years of probation had been to her the narrow, thorny path, leading to the mountain heights of sanctity. She had practised the counsels of Evangelical perfection, before pronouncing the solemn vows, as a religious. She had attained that sublime state, which St. Paul describes of himself: "Henceforth I live, yet not I, but Jesus-Christ liveth in me."

The interests of God had become hers; the extension of the Kingdom of His Divine Son, her only and ardent desire.

<sup>1</sup> See the Life of Mother *Marie de l'Incarnation* by our distinguished writer, *Rev. H. R. Casgrain*.

The conversion of the heathen, throughout the universe, was the continual object of her supplications.<sup>1</sup>

Not long after her admittance into the Community, one Christmas-tide, (it was in 1631,) a mysterious dream shadowed forth

1 The following passage, out of the many pages Mother Mary has written in a similar strain, will show how she regarded the state of the heathen Indians.

“ Je vois l'état déplorable de ceux qui ignorent les vérités divines ; il me semble qu'ils sont déjà dans les enfers et que le sang de mon Jésus a été répandu inutilement à leur égard. L'incompréhensible bonté de Dieu n'est pas connue, ni aimée, ni adorée, ni glorifiée par des créatures dans lesquelles il est ; et qui sont néanmoins capables de lui rendre tous ces devoirs. O que cette réflexion me blesse le cœur ! Je conjure ce Tout-Puissant à qui toutes choses sont faciles, et qui a créé de rien tout ce que nous voyons, que, s'il veut me condamner à l'enfer jusqu'au jour du jugement, il me fasse cette grande miséricorde ; pourvu qu'en vertu de cette sentence il convertisse tous ces pauvres abandonnés.”

*Tours, 1635. Lettre IX.*

her future course.<sup>1</sup> Through a dark and perilous way, she groped, hand-in-hand, with a lady whose countenance was unknown to her. A venerable personage directed the travellers by a motion of the hand, and they entered a spacious court, formed by the buildings of a Monastery. The pavement was of white marble, intersected by lines of vermilion. Over all this place, seemed to brood the spirit of stillness and peace. On one side rose a chapel of purest alabaster, upon the summit of which, as upon a throne, was seated the Virgin with the Divine Infant. She was gazing upon a desolate country, covered with fogs, and beset with mountains and precipices. In the midst of these gloomy wastes, the spires and gable-end of a little church, could be perceived, just visible above the fogs. The Virgin looked with sadness on the

<sup>1</sup> One is reminded here of St. Peter's vision relative to the conversion of the Gentiles: the mysterious sheet, the voice commanding an act that appeared contrary to duty.

dismal scene before her, and as Mary of the Incarnation pressed forward, close to her seat, the sweet Mother of Mercy turned towards her, with a smile of welcome, and gently bending down, kissed her forehead. Then she seemed to whisper some message to the Divine Infant, that concerned the salvation of souls. Mary of the Incarnation had not heard the words, but she knew their purport, and her heart burned more than ever for the conversion of pagan nations.

A year later, the mystery was removed by an interior call<sup>1</sup> to devote herself to found a Monastery of her Order in Canada. Henceforth, while praying for all the benighted nations of the earth, it is in particular for Canada that her zeal is enkindled. Many times each day, with pressing supplications, she pleads for souls, through the Sacred Heart of Jesus;—and still she seems to hear our Lord,

<sup>1</sup> In the Old Testament as well as in the New, God has spoken to man, whether by angels, as to Abraham and to Lot; or in dreams, as to St. Joseph.

bidding her to lend her aid, "to go to Canada, and there, build a house to Jesus and Mary." The Church of Canada was indeed just emerging from the darkness that through long ages has covered the land.

The "Relations" which the missionaries in New France began to publish in 1632, found their way to the Monastery, and helped to fan the flame.

It is for the Almighty to provide the way for the accomplishment of His own designs. In what manner this was brought about, we must now relate.

In another distant part of France, near the little town of Alençon, in Normandy, stood the castle of the Seigneur of Vau-bougon, the ancestral home of Madeleine de Chauvigny, better known by the name of Madame de la Peltrie. Like Mother Mary of the Incarnation, Madeleine, engaged once in the married state through pure compliance with the will of her parents, constantly refused, when these ties were broken, to contract a second

engagement. The piety of her early years had been remarkable; as a widow she perfected her love of God by the practice of exterior works of charity,—alms deeds, lodging and serving the poor, visiting and comforting the sick, and the unfortunate. To her also, the Relations, particularly that of 1635, were as a ray of light fashioning her future course.

One of the holy missionaries had uttered this moving appeal: "Alas! were the superfluous wealth of some of the ladies of France, employed to further the conversion of these poor Indians, what blessings would they not draw down upon their own families! What a glorious thing it would be in the sight of Heaven to gather up the precious drops of Jesus' blood and apply it to the souls of these poor heathens!"

How many hearts that thrilled on reading this vehement appeal, turned as soon to some trivial pursuit, giving no further heed to the voice of grace! Not so Madeleine. A high and noble purpose filled her soul, while it overwhelmed her with



the impression of her own unworthiness. She resolved to go to that heathen land, to gather up the precious Blood of Jesus!

Before she had taken any step towards the accomplishment of her pious project, she fell dangerously ill, and soon her life was despaired of. In this extremity, she made a solemn vow to go to Canada, and to found, in honor of St. Joseph, a Monastery of Ursulines for the instruction of the little Indian and French girls.

Suddenly she rose, from the brink of the grave, to perfect health! Many difficulties remained to be overcome. Family interests changed them to persecutions. Legal proceedings having failed to procure her arrest, those who coveted the wealth she was giving to good works, were fully determined to deprive her of her liberty in order to obtain it. Aware of this, and supported by able casuists, she adopted measures, suited only to exceptional cases; such as hers evidently was<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> It was on this occasion that the zeal of a pious

A journey to Paris enabled her to consult Rev. Father Gondren, General of the Oratory, and St. Vincent of Paul :— by both these eminent men, her devout project was approved.

It remained to obtain nuns for the proposed foundation. Madame de la Peltrie sought the advice of Rev. Father Poncet, charged with the missions of Canada ; and, to her great joy, learned from him the particulars of the vocation of Mother Mary of the Incarnation.

Not many weeks later, the pious widow was at Tours, negotiating the affair with the Archbishop. Admitted into the Monastery, Mother Mary recognizes in the

gentleman of Caen, M. de Bernières, was awakened for the Missions of Canada. After aiding Madame de la Peltrie in a difficult conjuncture, he remained a devoted friend of the Ursulines, taking charge of their affairs in France with a benevolence worthy of the highest praise. It is a source of regret that Mother Mary of the Incarnation's letters to M. de Bernières were not recovered : to him, naturally, the state of the Convent, its penury and its resources, must have been stated, from year to year.

stranger, the companion with whom, in that mysterious dream, eight years before, she had toiled along a dangerous path through an unknown, desert land.

It was necessary to choose a companion for Mother Mary ; this was equally overruled by Providence. Not one in that fervent community would have shrunk from the proposed sacrifice ; all were anxious, even, to obtain the nomination. One, alone, in her humility, judged herself unworthy to aspire to such a distinction : —yet she was the chosen one. Of gentle mien, and delicate health, the youthful and accomplished Mary de la Troche of St. Bernard, was of the noble blood of the De Savonnières. Her vocation to a religious life at the early age of fourteen, had already cost her parents an immense sacrifice : How was she to obtain the consent either of them or of her community ? When God wills, “there is a way” and thus it proved in the case of Mlle. de la Troche.

Attributing the unlooked-for success to

the protection of St. Joseph, to whom she had confided all her hopes, Mother M. Bernard exchanged her name for that of Mother St. Joseph; as she will be known in the subsequent pages.

It remained to regulate the temporal affairs of the projected Foundation, and to receive the Archbishop's benediction with their "obediences" or Episcopal authorization. It was their *Bill of Sight*, their *Passport* in authentic form,—although not issued from the *Foreign Office*.

The assembly was held in the Archbishop's palace. The Venerable Prelate, now eighty years of age, was profoundly moved. When the moment of parting came, he arose, and presenting the two Religious to Madame de la Peltrie, addressed her in these remarkable words: "Behold the two foundation stones of the temple you are about to erect in the New World to glorify the Almighty. I entrust them to you for this end, according to your demand. May they be two precious stones in the foundation, on the model of

the Jerusalem above. May this edifice be a mansion of peace, of grace, and heavenly blessings, more abundant than those of the Ancient Temple of Solomon. May the efforts of hell never prevail against it, no more than against the Holy Church itself. And since this House is to be built for God, may He fix His dwelling there, as the Father and as the Spouse, not only of the nuns I confide to you, but of all who may accompany them, or who will live there, after them, to the end of time."

These solemn words, the farewell blessing, the last will and testament, as it were, of the aged Prelate, are never read without emotion by the daughters of Mother Mary of the Incarnation, who would fain believe them a prophecy.

A last adieu to their dear Monastery, to their beloved Mothers and Sisters,—and their long journey commences.

At Paris they form an acquaintance with the Ursulines of the great city, who were destined later to lend them efficient aid.

The Queen, Anne of Austria; the Duchess of Aiguillon, and of Brienne; and other ladies of quality, saw many times the future benefactresses of the poor Indians of Canada; and not without bestowing pious donations as a pledge of affection and esteem.

Their next pause is at Dieppe, where another Convent of Ursulines has inherited the missionary spirit.—A third companion was found there, in Mother Cecile Richer de la Croix, who seems, like another Matthew, to have risen at the first sound of the Divine Master's voice, ready to follow Him, even to the ends of the earth.

The merchant ships, bound for Canada, had taken in their freight,—dry goods, implements of labor, live-stock, seed, salt meat,—a miscellaneous assortment—and were only waiting now for a favorable breeze. Among the expected passengers were three nuns<sup>1</sup> from the Hospital in

<sup>1</sup> Mothers Marie Guenet de St. Ignace, Anne le Cointre de St. Bernard, and Marie Forestier de St. Bonaventure.

Dieppe, who under the high patronage of the Duchess of Aiguillon, were going to Quebec to found a House of their Order : there were also the Rev. Fathers Vimont, Pinet, and Chaumonot, for the Missions ; and now, at the latest hour—an unexpected recruit—appeared Madame de la Peltrie and the three Ursulines.

On the 4th of May, all being in readiness and the wind favorable, our voyagers embarked. Three long months with no other horizon but the mingling sea and sky ; no other landscape but the placid waters or the tossing billows !—such is their prospect, at best. Before they quit the Channel, they are rocked till all are sea-sick ; they barely escape being shipwrecked ; but that is nothing : — “ Their hearts are in peace, because they are fully abandoned to God.”—Who would not wish them God-speed on their long voyage ?

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## CHAPTER III.

1639.

### ARRIVAL OF THE URSULINES IN CANADA.

It was mid-summer, when the little fleet which had lost sight of the coasts of France in May, anchored, at last, in the harbor of Tadoussac, at the confluence of the Saguenay with the St. Lawrence. Our travelers, no doubt, were struck with the stern and savage grandeur of the scenery ; the black impending cliffs, rising perpendicularly, and forming a gigantic gate-way, through which the dark waters of the Saguenay issue,—a fathomless flood,—sublimely reminding the spectator of long ages past, and terrible convulsions of nature since her birth.

The dense, lonely forests, were unbroken, save by the curling smoke of the wigwam fire, or the rude sheds of the trading-sta-



tion. Strange, too, and wild, were these swarthy hunters,—the Algonquins and Montagnais, who had come, bringing their furs,—the skin of the beaver, the seal, and marten, to exchange for blankets, kettles, knives, and other European commodities.

The poor Indian looked with amazement on these “daughters of Sachems” who, he was told, had left their homes beyond the Great Sea, to teach the wives and daughters of the Redman how to avoid the flames of another world.

Impatient to reach their destination, the passengers leave the Admiral to its traffic, and in a smaller vessel press onwards towards Quebec. The natives, swift of foot, follow along the solitary shores, unwilling to lose sight of a spectacle so new and wonderful. The last day of July is near its close, when, turning the eastern point of the Isle of Orleans, the semicircle of the northern shore, opens before them in all the loveliness of a summer’s sunset; varying its beauties from the abrupt mountain-head, the term of their voyage,

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to the low wave where the St. Charles  
brings in its tribute; the pleasant beach,  
adorned with woodland scenery; the little  
rustic villa of Beauport, peeping through  
the trees;—the precipitous ledge, where  
the Montmorency casts its sheet of foam.

Of all this, the slumbering River had a  
picture in its bosom. Our voyagers had  
another in their souls; a picture of all they  
fain would do and suffer for this Land of  
Promise.

It was decided not to enter the port of  
Quebec that night; and, a little bay <sup>1</sup> pre-  
senting itself on the pleasant wooded Is-  
land, they resolved to go on shore. How  
refreshing to the sea-faring voyagers is  
the cool, forest breeze, laden with sweet  
odors! how delightful this evening scene,  
where every feature is novel and grand!  
But of this our travellers take no note;  
they have only told us how they lodged

<sup>1</sup> The Island of Orleans was, at that date, unin-  
habited. The little bay was, apparently, that now  
called: *L'Anse du Fort*.

in cabins, constructed by the sailors in Indian style;—a wigwam was their hotel for that first night on shore, in the New-World.

Then with what joy their hearts were filled to see themselves under these “grand old forests” which they made resound with “hymns to God!”

During the evening, news of the bivouac on the point of the Island, reached the fort of Quebec. At early dawn,—it was the first of August—the booming cannon from the heights of Cape Diamond, announced the arrival of this fresh recruit for the Colony. The Governor’s yacht, sent out to honor the missionary band, was seen returning with flying colors.

While the strangers approach, let us with them view the scene.

Before us towers the bold Promontory, crowned with military works. At the base of the cliffs, is a cluster of store-houses, sheds, and other wooden tenements, set down in the midst of fir-trees, sumachs,

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The first sound of the cannon has  
brought out the swarthy forms of the  
Huron traders. Some rush to the water's  
edge and launch their light canoes; others  
are grouped in various attitudes along the  
shore. Another flourish of military music,  
and the beach is thronged with all the  
population of the city.

The Governor,—in plumed slouched  
hat, and scarlet embroidered coat,—leads  
the central group. It is the gallant Charles  
Huault de Montmagny, with his suite, all  
in brilliant uniform;—his Lieutenant De  
Lisle, his secretary Piraube; his friends  
St. Jean, De Repentigny, De Tilly, La  
Potherie, Du Herisson; Juchereau des  
Chatelets, the factor of the fur-company.  
The Jesuit Fathers are there, in their  
clerical costume. Gentle dames mingle  
with the gentry, and with the other groups  
of citizens. More numerous than all are  
the crowd of workmen, artisans, and  
clerks, who have leave to suspend their

labors for the day, and who join the squad of soldiers in their noisy demonstrations : while perched on every rock along the Mountain path, are other Indian braves, the villagers of Sillery.

The yatch has neared the shore. Our missionary nuns, on landing, prostrate, and kiss the soil of their adopted country ; embracing, in their hearts, all the crosses it may produce.

The introductions over, the pious cortege moves on, climbing the zigzag pathway up the steep, now known as Mountain street.

At the top of the hill, to the left, is the little chapel of our Lady of Recovery<sup>1</sup>. There, the Holy Sacrifice is offered by the Father Superior of the Missions ; it is followed by the *Te Deum*. The emotions of this pious assembly, we shall not attempt to penetrate ; they could only be fully known to Him, whose grace had inspired

<sup>1</sup> Built by Champlain in 1632, in fulfilment of a vow he had made while retained in France.

the undertaking, and the sympathy it excites in congenial souls.

The rites of hospitality reunited the *élite* of the company, with the strangers at the castle. We have no further details of this first day. All the French families had a right to an introduction. The nuns must have noticed the Heberts, the Couillards, the De Puiseaux; perhaps also, the Seigneur of Beauport, <sup>1</sup> Giffard.

The next scene recorded in the old volumes which have guided us thus far, is a visit, on the day following, to the Indian hamlet of Sillery. The Ursulines and the Hospitallers, conducted by Rev. Father LeJeune, proceed first through the "Grande Allée," (now St. Louis Road,) bordered in nearly all its length, with fine old forest trees. Birds of new song

<sup>1</sup> M. Giffard obtint de la compagnie des Cent-Associés la Seigneurie de Beauport, et dans l'été de 1634, sept familles nombreuses y arrivèrent en qualité de censitaires. Le Sieur Giffard était aussi accompagné de sa femme et ses enfants. *Hist. du Can., Ferland.*

and plumage, flowers of unknown forms,—but chiefly conversation on the prospects of the mission,—diversified the way.

The hamlet was enclosed by a palisade, as a sort of fortification. The gateway thrown open, discloses the life and manners of barbarism, just softened by a touch of civilization and purified by Christianity.

The Reduction consists of some fifteen families, their habitations varying from the primitive rudeness of the Algonquin wigwam, to the substantial stone hut.<sup>1</sup> A chapel, a mission-house for the priest, and an Infirmary, or hospital, occupy the centre of the village.

At sight of the nuns clad in their peculiar costume, the poor squaws gather up their little papooses and seem ready to flee to the woods with them; the older red-skinned urchins, stop their wild play, and huddle together;—but at a motion from the good priest, whom they know.

<sup>1</sup> In 1642, there were yet but four stone cottages.  
*Rel.*

all gather round, and soon forget their fright. When told that these "daughters of Captains" had left their happy homes, in France, to come and teach them more about the Blessed Jesus, or to serve them in their sickness, their wonder and admiration may be imagined ;—but not the joy, the affection with which the holy nuns looked upon these children of the forest.

Not a little Indian girl appeared, but Madame de la Peltrie pressed her to her bosom, and kissed her with a mother's fondness, unmindful of much that might have created disgust. The nuns were not less moved ; and gathered round them, by the aid of their good conductor, several of the little half-clothed children, to be their future pupils. They next visit the chapel, and hear the voices of the good Indians singing : " I believe in God, the Almighty Creator " ; — " I believe in Jesus Christ our Lord. " — Hymns too, in a language that seems like the chattering, and twittering of birds ;—but the nuns knew they

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were singing of Jesus,—that was enough to move them to tears of devotion. Father Le Jeune announces that there is a neophyte to be baptized. Must not Madame de la Peltrie be the God-mother?

The visit over, the good Hospital Sisters and the Ursulines embraced each other for a final adieu.

The two Orders had formed one Community for the last three months, while the ship was their monastery and the Ocean their cloister. Now, their respective avocations require them to separate; still living and laboring for the same end, the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

The Hospital Sisters find a comfortable dwelling-house in the Upper Town, near the Fort, to shelter them until their Monastery, already commenced, will be ready to receive them.

As to the Ursulines, they have the loan of a small<sup>1</sup> building on the wharf, pre-

<sup>1</sup> On the market place, facing the Lower Town Church of N. D. des Victoires.

ferable, certainly, to an Indian wigwam ; in which, however, Mother Mary of the Incarnation declares, for her part, she was prepared to lodge.

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## CHAPTER IV.

**1639-1642.**

## THREE YEARS' LABORS.

The departure of the French fleet from the harbor of Quebec, early in autumn, left the colonists to their seclusion, severing their last link with the mother country, for the next six or eight months. The Huron traders, also, had rolled up their bark houses, and launched their light flotilla, leaving the strand to its wonted tranquillity.

Our Ursulines are already laboring

"according to their Institute," for the French pupils, at the same time that they are tasking their energies to the utmost to acquire the Indian languages. They have an able and willing teacher in Rev. Father Le Jeune, who has become so learned only at the expense of rude labor, and many months of forest-life with the savage hunters. The young seminarists, also, are efficient aids, one especially, who having lived near the trading-post of Three Rivers, has quite a vocabulary of French words which she can translate into Algonquin.

But our readers have not yet seen the interior of that little Convent, "*the Louvre*", as the nuns facetiously named it. This *palace* consists of two rooms, one 16 feet square, the other of smaller dimensions with a garret, and a cellar.—The arrangements need to be economical. The larger room serves as a dormitory, the beds being arranged along the wall in tiers; it is, at the same time, a parlor, a kitchen, a refectory, recreation room, and choir.

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The smaller apartment is a class-room. An additional wing,—a sort of shed, serves as an exterior parlor, where, through the usual grating, the nuns may speak of God to brave chiefs, and warriors of the Indian race. The colonists, fortunately, have invented an Order of Architecture, which is not expensive;—a few strong posts set in the ground, some bars to join them, the whole covered with planks and finished off with rough plastering. A chapel in this style, before the winter closes in, is raised, and receives the "gilded Tabernacle," the parting gift of a Parisian friend<sup>1</sup>! It is a delightful "devout chapel" so one affirms who saw it<sup>2</sup>, "agreeable for its poverty" and above all precious to the good Ursulines and their pious Foundress, for the Adorable Presence which it procures them. The cloister-wall, enclosing a large space, is

<sup>1</sup> Mde de la Ville-aux-Cleres.

<sup>2</sup> Mother St.-Claire writes a charming letter to her Community in Paris, after her arrival in Canada. See *Histoire des Ursulines*, Vol. I, p. 38.

formed by a palisade, and by the solid barrier of the mountain, plentifully decked at its base and at various heights, with shrubbery, wild-vines, and flowers. Within this cloistered space, they set up a sort of rustic arbor, on the plan of a Huron lodge, to serve as another class-room for Indian women and children.

All these accommodations are of a nature to suggest thoughts of the contrast between a poor hut in Canada, and the elegant seigneurial castles of Savonnières and De Vaubougon, or even the spacious monasteries of Dieppe and Tours. But Canada is to them a "Terrestrial paradise and if they have anything to complain of, it is that they have not enough to suffer." Thus they wrote to their friends, even after that terrible scourge, the small-pox, had transformed their school-room and the dormitory into a hospital.

Already, three years before the arrival of the nuns, a sort of pestilence had spread terror and desolation among the Indian tribes. This year, soon after the departure

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of the mercantile vessels, the small-pox, in its most virulent form, made its appearance at Sillery.

The little Convent in the Lower Town was, in its turn, invaded by the malady, which attacked the Indian children only. All the seminarists—as the Indian boarders were called—had it, affording the nuns abundant occasion for the exercise of charity. The beds of the patients, placed upon the floor, left hardly room to move among them. Night and day the poor little sufferers were tended by their indefatigable nurses. Four died of it before mid-winter, when its intensity diminished. At the end of February, it had entirely disappeared; but not until the stock of clothing destined to the use of the Indian children for two years, was exhausted, as well as the provision of linen for the Convent.

Through all this misery, the nuns kept up their spirits, and their health. Their only anxiety was, lest the pagan Indians, believing the sickness to be the effects of

baptism, should refuse to send them their children. In this they were happily disappointed. With the cessation of the malady, the nuns found more congenial occupation instructing Indian women and girls : the men also frequently appeared at their grate, and listened to their teachings with as much docility as the children. Their seminarists increased to eighteen or twenty. Two French pupils were even then, boarding in the little Convent. The number of day scholars is not stated, but it included "all who were of an age to be instructed." When the warm season returned, the bark cabin needed no fire ; and, from the surrounding shrubbery, came fresh air, and sweet songs, mingling with the cadence of the waters, plashing upon the beach.

In July, the annual fleet brought them Mothers St. Athanasius and St. Claire, from the Ursuline Monastery of Paris, to aid them in their arduous labours. The latter, writing to her community soon after her arrival, describes her new home

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where they "live in admirable peace and union." Mother Mary of the Incarnation, she says, "treats me with too much honor; the sweet odor of sanctity seems to surround her, and to embalm all who approach her. Mother St. Joseph is a charming person, most accomplished in every way: during recreation she often makes us laugh till we cry: it is impossible to be melancholy in her company. She loves the little Indian girls like a mother. After catechism, she teaches them to sing hymns and to touch the viol.

Sometimes she gives them leave to perform one of their own pantomime dances, and the little scholars make no ceremony of inviting Mad. de la Peltrie to dance with them, which she does with the best grace in the world."

The two Parisians commence studying the Indian language with courage, remarking that the other nuns are "well advanced". They have to learn "the grammars and write themes, like students in Latin." Two languages, at least, are re-



quired : the Algonquin, and the Huron. <sup>1</sup>  
All are busy, and all are happy in that  
little Convent, where the love of God  
reigns supreme.

<sup>1</sup> The difference between the *Huron* and *Algonquin*  
will appear from the inspection of the Our Father in  
the two languages.

*The Lord's Prayer in the Abnaki, a dialect of  
the Algonquin.*

Kemitanksena spomkik ayan waiwaiselmognatch  
ayiliwisian amantai paitriwai witawaikai ketepelta  
mohauganeck aylikitankouak ketelaitamohangan  
spomkik tali yo nampikik paitehi kik tankouataitche  
mamilinai yo paimi ghisgak daita-ski-kouai aipoumena  
yopa hatehi anaihail tama wihaikai haissikakan  
wiholaikaipan aliniona kisi anaihailtamakokaik  
kaikauwia kaitaipanik mosak kaita litchi kitawikaik  
tampamohoutchi saghihouneminamai ou lahamistakai  
saghihousouaminai mamaitchikill, Nialest. *Note in  
Shea's Am. Cath. Miss. p. 137.*

*The Lord's Prayer in Huron, (as translated by  
Brebœuf.)*

Onaistan de aronhiae istaré. Sasen tehondachi  
endateré sachiendaoian. Ont aioton sa cheouan-  
diosta endindé. Ont aioton senchien sarasta, ohouent  
soone aché toti ioti Aronhiaone. Ataindataia set  
nonenda tara cha ecantate aouantehan. Ont

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asen tehondachi  
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The Ursulines had indeed come to the Colony, at an opportune moment. The field in which the good missionaries labored long with little success, had now begun to yield fruit. Our Mothers considered themselves supremely happy in being called to aid in gathering in the precious harvest.

taôuandionrhens, sen atonarrihouanderacoui, to  
chienne ioti nendi onsa onendionrhens de oua  
onkirrihouanderai. Enon ché chana atakhionindahas  
d'oucaota. Ca senti ioti. *Shea*, p. 164.

The Algonquin and the Huron are the mother tongues of a hundred tribes who wandered over a space of more than eighteen hundred leagues of the North American continent, comprised between the sources of the Mississipi and the Atlantic as far as the coast of N. Carolina.

The Algonquin has less energy than the Huron, but is softer, clearer, and more elegant.

The Huron, or Iroquois has five principal dialects. This language has but four vowels, *a, e, i, o*, and a diphthong of the value of the English *w*; it has six consonants, *h, k, n, r, s, t*.

Extracted from *Travels in America, Chateaubriand*.

The difficulties of the "situation" were however great. The revenue of the foundation was only nine hundred livres;—a larger sum had been expended on the lodgings, such as they were, in the Lower Town, and on the seminarists. Madame de la Peltrie had calculated for the expenses of six; but they had taken in three times that number.<sup>1</sup> It must be borne in mind that the Indian pupils, and sometimes their families, had to be fed and clothed gratis. At the parlor, where the nuns exercised their zeal in favor of the Indian men, it was not merely the bread of instruction that was broken: according

<sup>1</sup> Au lieu de six il en est entré 18 dans cette petite maison. . . . sans compter les petites filles françaises qui vont pour être instruites; sans compter aussi les filles et les femmes sauvages qui entrent à toute heure en la chambre où on enseigne leurs petites compatriotes, et qui assez souvent y passent la nuit. *Relation*, 1640.

Outre les séminaristes arrêtées, les Ursulines en ont d'autres passagères, vêtues à la sauvage qui demeurent quelque temps pour être instruites. *Relation*, 1641.

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to the Indian laws of hospitality the food of the body was indispensable.

Among them, it is considered an affront to send away a guest without offering him to eat. The "pot of *sagamité*" must be constantly on the fire. From time to time, a more "splendid banquet" was prepared for sixty or eighty persons. Then it required "a bushel of black plums, twenty-four pounds of bread, a due quantity of Indian-meal or ground-peas; a dozen of tallow candles melted; two or three pounds of fat pork" all well boiled together. "It would be a pity, says our judicious Mother, to deprive these poor people of such a feast, since it requires no more to content even their sachems and war-chiefs, that is to say, their princes."

But if the revenue of the foundation was insufficient, charity, in those times, was not an idle word. Pious friends in France, moved by the letters of the nuns, sent them presents,—clothing for their seminarists, tools for their workmen, a chalice for their altar. The good Ursulines

of Paris and of Tours, are always first on the list of benefactresses.

In the Relations, also, the Rev. Fathers set forth the poverty of the little Convent, and the good the nuns were doing. Rev. Father Vimont laments that they have not the means to build, and invites in his amiable manner, two courageous young ladies, armed with a good dowry, to come to the assistance of the little Convent, "which contains more joy within its narrow limits than ever was found in the palace of the Cæsars!"

In the spring of 1641, Madame de la Peltrie laid the foundation stone of the Monastery, on the advantageous site granted by the Governor, in the name of the Hundred Associates. The deed specified that the donation <sup>1</sup> of "six arpents of land within the limits of the city of Quebec, was to enable the said Rev. Ursuline Mothers to build a Convent where they may live according to the rules of their

<sup>1</sup> To this day a Mass is said in the Chapel of the Monastery for the "Messieurs de la Compagnie."

Institute, and devote themselves to the education of young girls, French<sup>1</sup> and Indian."

While the building was going on, the number of their seminarists amounted to forty-eight or fifty; the parlor visits exceeded eight hundred in the course of one year.

Mother Mary of the Incarnation, with all her zeal, confesses that the nuns, five in number, have had labor beyond their strength, and that the visits at the parlor were continual. "But, she adds, the Providence of our Heavenly Father provides for all things. The pot of *sagamité* was never empty."

<sup>1</sup> De 1639 à 1642 il y avait environ 40 familles établies sur des terres, depuis le Cap Rouge jusqu'à la côte Ste. Geneviève et N. D. des Anges; et de Beauport jusqu'à la rivière aux Chiens du Chateau Richer, et dans le voisinage du Cap Tourmente.

## CHAPTER V.

1639-1641.

### MADAME DE LA PELTRIE AND THE INDIANS.

In the little Convent on the wharf, the "Louvre" of those French Ladies who inhabited it, there were two *boarders*, who deserve a special mention: These were the good Foundress, and her attendant, Miss Charlotte Barré. It must have been from motives of the purest charity and self-denial, that Madame de la Peltrie resolved to content herself with such accommodations as that poor cottage afforded:—all that she could save by living in poverty would be so much gain for the poor Indians!

But our readers have contemplated long enough the picture of privations, and sufferings. Let us follow the generous French Lady, when she goes abroad always in the interest of the dear seminarians, or of the missions, in general.

On one of these occasions an incident occurred which has been recorded at full length in the *Relations*.<sup>1</sup>

It was the Feast of the Assumption,—only fifteen days after the nuns had been welcomed to their new home. There was a grand Procession, in which six Indians, in splendid robes of silk and velvet, lately sent them by the French Monarch, followed the Cross and Banner; a hundred of their fur-clad brethren, marching two by two, in the order assigned them came after. Next walked Madame de la Peltrie, leading some of her little seminarists, in new tunics of red camelot and white caps; then came a long file of Indian girls and women, clothed in garments of their own fashion,—a frock, made of a blanket or a moose skin falling from the shoulders to the knee, and fastened around the waist by a girdle; their long black hair was simply gathered behind their neck;

<sup>1</sup> 1639. The particulars that follow are gathered partly from the *Relations* and partly from the *Letters* of Mother Mary of the Incarnation.

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necklaces and bracelets of colored beads completed their attire on this holiday occasion.

The clergy headed the French population in the usual order.

But it is not of the procession itself that we write. We shall not follow it from station to station, pausing at the Hospital and then at the Ursulines, where the nuns sing the *Exaudiat*, and the poor Indians as usual, wonder and admire. Neither shall we tell of the dinner given, at the Castle, to a hundred of the Indians; while the six, transformed by French court-dresses into gentlemen,—all but their bronzed faces,—were treated as royal guests at the Jesuits' table.

Our purpose is with what took place after Vespers, when the Superior of the Jesuits was notified that an Indian Council was awaiting his presence in the College-hall.

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Father Vimont and Madame de la Peltrie to take part in the proceedings. Entering, they found Indian chiefs and notables, to the number of twenty or twenty-five, seated around the hall, in their own style, on mats they had provided. The Governor, with Madame de la Peltrie and Miss Barré on one side, and the two Jesuits on the other, have taken seats and are waiting.

An Algonquin chief, rising, looks around upon the assembly, and begins: "Be attentive, Father LeJeune; Let not thy spirit wander; give heed to my discourse. Ho! ho! answers the Father,—and the Algonquin continues:—"The words thou hearest are not mine; I am the mouth of all my brethren seated here. We wish to believe in God; we wish to cultivate the ground; but we want help. Now tell our great chief Ononthio to write to our king. Let him say: All the Redmen wonder to hear that you think of them. They say to you: Pity us, send us help. We wish to cultivate the ground. We

cannot make houses like yours unless you help us. Father LeJeune, tell thy brother, who has come to be in thy place, to write for us. Write thou also, that our king may believe us.—I have spoken.”

The first orator takes his seat: an Abnaki rises and urges the same suit with much pathos. He concludes: “Certainly thou speakest good, promising to help us to live like men. Do not deceive us. I go to my home, there, where the sun stands in the middle of the sky [the south]. When I come back, the snow will yet be on the mountains. I will come to see if thou sayest the truth, if thou hast men to help us, that we may no more live in the woods like the beasts.”

This spirited appeal, translated by Father LeJeune, moved the assembly to compassion. De Montmagny promised to do all in his power for them. Father Vimont was nigh losing patience, seeing that for the want of a little money those poor people were debarred from receiving religious instruction.

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Madame de la Peltrie exclaims: "Alas! must it be said that we cannot aid these good people to save their souls. The expense of one ball in Paris, one soirée, would procure the means of opening heaven to these unfortunates. Rev. Father, continues she, addressing LeJeune, tell them that if I could aid them with my own hands, I would do so. I will try, at least, to plant something for them."

Her speech, translated, made the Indian braves smile.

"Tell the Lady, said one, that corn planted by hands as delicate as hers, would take a long time to ripen."

The conclusion of the assembly was, that a great effort should be made to help the Indians the next spring, according to their request.

Now for another scene.—Let us follow Madame de la Peltrie, on one of her frequent excursions to Sillery. All the seminarists accompany her, on holiday occasions.

There she sometimes finds the squaws gathering corn, which they suspend from the sloping sides of their bark habitations, till they look gay as if decked for some festal ceremony; or, they are roasting it before the fire, previous to pounding it in their wooden mortars. Sometimes a family, just come to live in the hamlet and not yet provided with any other utensils but those of their own manufacture, cook a dinner in her presence, kindling a fire by striking two white stones together; then filling a large bark tray or bowl, with water, they heat other stones red-hot and throw them in, till they have boiled a piece of meat. Perhaps they prefer it roasted;—then they show her a cord made of tender bark or of hemp, with which they suspend their steak, turning it as adroitly as the kitchen-maid manages a spit.

If it is a pleasant day when *Madame* is there, the little Indian boys are at play with the bow and arrow,—not as noisy as a similar group of little French boys, but

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silent as the braves who listen to a harangue in council, unless some unskilful throw, or some unlooked-for success, provoke a laugh or a good-natured joke.

A well-known author has said, that simplicity of soul is an inexhaustible source of happiness.<sup>1</sup> This simplicity was possessed by the Indians of our America. They only needed to be enlightened by religion, to be delivered of their gloomy superstitions, cruel practices, revengeful passions, and absurd pride, to be happy. That liberty of life, which was theirs; that freedom from the shackles of custom and the cares of business which civilized man seeks from time to time, and enjoys with infinite zest, was not incompatible with the duties of a Christian.

But turning from this digression, we are again with Madame de la Peltrie, at Sil-lery.

The second year that the Ursulines

<sup>1</sup> Chateaubriand.

passed in Canada, the Foundress went to the Indian Chapel for midnight Mass, with a few of the most exemplary of the seminarists. Little Agnes—not yet five years old—was of the number. Returning to the Convent, she astonished the nuns by her vivid description of all she had seen and all she had heard. There was a sermon, and she well understood that the Bethlehemites of old, refused a shelter to the Blessed Virgin, and the Infant Jesus. Her indignation against them is great, and her compassion for the sufferings of the Divine Infant in the Cave of Bethlehem, is so real, that she moves the nuns to tears while she imitates the tone of voice, the gestures, as well as the words of the preacher.

But Madame de la Peltrie as well as Miss Barré were oftener at home than abroad, and we shall hear of both several times yet, as well as of little Agnes.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### EFFECTS OF INSTRUCTION.

From the forest-home of the young Indian girl to the Convent, the distance, in a moral sense, was infinite. Frolicsome and wild as the little animals that roamed with her, she knew as little as they of obedience, or wholesome restraint. The only authority she was invited to respect, was that of her mother, or her aged grand-parents; but if she chose to be wilful, on no account was she punished, nor compelled to obey.

Her clothing was scanty, and of the roughest material; only in winter were her feet and limbs protected by a coarse sort of mocassin, and gaiters. She knew of no other cosmetics but soot and bear's grease; her matted hair had never been visited by a comb, nor by the scissors. Her bed had been the ground, by the



wigwam fire, shared equally by the dogs and by the rest of the family.

It is not surprising that some of these "wild birds" caged for the first time, occasionally flew off to the forest; but when by affection and great patience, they had been tamed, they proved most docile to instructions, and most exemplary in piety.

Little Algonquins from Sillery, were the first seminarists the Ursulines undertook to form; and as neither understood the language of the other, the difficulty must have been extreme. "A great desire to speak, is a great help towards doing so," says Mother Mary. We may readily believe it, since the nuns were able to begin to instruct in Algonquin before the end of two months. Mother St. Joseph learned also the Huron, and had occasion for it in the following spring.

But with what success have the Ursulines toiled during these three years. Of what avail were their instructions

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"A tree is known by its fruit." Let us examine the letters, written by the nuns to their friends, and we shall find that they were consoled beyond measure, by the miracles of grace they daily witnessed among these same little forest-girls. The *Relations* concur in the same statements.

Mother Mary declares that these new Christians are as meek as lambs, and that after their baptism they preserve an admirable purity of conscience. Among the seminarists of the first year, she mentions little Marie Gamitiens, (godchild of Mlle. de Chevreuse) who at the age of five or six years, is no sooner awake in the morning that she begins her prayers; she says her beads during mass, and sings hymns in her own language. Marie Madeleine Abatenau, (godchild of another noble lady) is a model of obedience and address, knowing her catechism and reciting her prayers, with a devotion capable of inspiring others with the same.—She also is only six years old.

But Agnes Chabdikwachich is twelve.

It was she who seeing one of the Rev. Fathers at a little distance from the place where she was making up her bundle of faggots, threw away her hatchet, crying out: "Teach me;" and this, with such grace, that the good Father pleaded her cause, and brought her to the Convent with one of her little companions. Both were soon prepared for baptism; and at Easter, with two others, made their first Communion. Agnes is not only well instructed in her Catechism, she is also skilful with her needle; she handles the "viol,"—knows how to read; and is so gentle and well behaved, that she merits the name of *lamb*, which she bears.

Little Nicole Assipanse is seven years old:—At the end of five months, Nicole knows the principal mysteries of Religion, her catechism, and her prayers, so well that when her mother comes for her returning from the winter's chase, the little daughter teaches her poor pagan father and mother to know the true God. With all her talents, she has the true

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dian character;—she must go with her parents, who have no other child; she coaxes her mother, and gains her point.

But here is, Marie Negabamat, so accustomed to the wild life of the woods that the good chief, her father, to entice her to remain in the Convent, sends with her two of her friends, already baptized. This was not enough;—she takes to the woods in a few days, tearing her red tunic to shreds. One more trial, and Marie is obedient; she becomes the model, not only of the seminarists but of the French pupils, although, as our Mother remarks, “the young girls of Quebec are extremely well brought up.”

From day to day she advances in piety; she relishes religious instructions, has a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and so loves prayer that when the pious exercises are over among the seminarists, she goes into the room where the French pupils are, to continue them.

Marie Amiskivean wins the heart of all who see her. She is seventeen years

old, and a model of candor and innocence. She excites her companions to piety, treating them with all the charity of a mother. Moreover, she speaks a little French, and has aided the nuns greatly in their study of her language.

Another young Algonquin from Three Rivers, receives the grace of baptism in such dispositions of fervor and contrition, that Rev. Father Buteux, who had sent her to the Convent, is moved to tears, and tells the nuns that this conquest alone, is well worth all the sacrifices they have made, and all the toils they have undergone in Canada.

In reading of such effects of Divine grace, we understand better how the nuns could endure with joy the privations and hardships of the mission. Let us cite a few more examples.

A little band were preparing for their first Communion:—the Rev. Father Pijart once, and Mother Mary two or three times a day, instructed them how to prepare for their Heavenly Guest. They

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were heard exclaiming: — “Oh! when will Jesus come! when will He give us the kiss of peace in our souls.”

Marie Negabamat was in great jubilation:—“Why are you so joyful, inquired one?”

“Oh! cried she, I shall soon receive Jesus into my heart.”

They begged permission to fast on the eve of their first Communion; and afterwards made that their practice whenever they prepared for the reception of the Great Sacrament. These children were not more than twelve years old.

Many of the Indian girls had first to be prepared for the Sacrament of baptism. One day, five were baptized in the little chapel of the Convent. At other times the Sacrament was administered to men and women, old and young. Their edifying deportment was most touching. One young woman had waited many months for this precious grace; when the healing waters were poured over her,

turning to the spectators, she exclaimed: "There! it is done! my soul is cleansed at last."

Were these little forest girls susceptible of gratitude? of benevolence, and the other fine qualities of the mind which adorn their possessor? Let their teachers Mothers Ste. Croix and St Joseph, answer: "Our seminarists, they declare, are exceedingly grateful, and appreciate highly the services we render them. One day, seeing the difficulty we have to learn their language, they exclaimed: Oh! if we could give you our tongues to speak with, we would do so with pleasure. A better proof of their gratitude is found in their docility, their affection for their teachers; their willingness to be corrected of their faults,—a thing so contrary to the customs of their race,—their readiness to conform to the regulations of the school and to remain away from their parents.

As an instance of their kindness toward each other, let us cite another passage from the long pages before us. "Some

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new scholars had come in; there was no clothing prepared to put upon them;—quickly our old seminarists supply the deficiency, without being requested to do so, bringing whatever they could spare from their own little wardrobe. It is they who commence the instructions. They have no greater pleasure than to teach the new-comers what we have taught them."

All the scholars mentioned thus far, were Montagnais or Algonquins.

The first Huron seminarist, was the niece of the famous war-chief Chihatenhwa. He had seen the "holy Virgins," *les saintes filles*, robed in black, who had come to teach the little Indian girls the way to heaven; and others, dressed differently, who would take care of the sick. Great was the admiration of his countrymen when they heard the marvellous story. He brings his little Teresa to the Convent, where she becomes a prodigy of learning and of piety. When next the Huron flotilla covers the river, Chihatenhwa, from afar, points out to his brethren



the "House of Jesus," and hastens to meet his little Teresa. She is only thirteen, but she had the zeal of an apostle. Her exhortations startle and subdue the most obstinate. On their return to Huronia, they publish her fame throughout the tribe. "Teresa has more sense than any one who has ever appeared in their country. Doubtless the one who has instructed her is also the greatest genius among the French?" Once, at Sillery, she holds a discourse to catechumens, who remain with her more than two hours! The sachems, even of other tribes, listen to her with reverence. As to *scientific* attainments, Teresa speaks two languages with facility, and sings in Huron, French, and Latin.

The nuns, at another time, must take a few days to attend to their own souls "for of what avail would it be to preach to others and be one's-self a cast-away? The little girls are to have a week of holidays, with Madame de la Peltrie. But they must make no noise, for fear of dis-

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turbing their good Mothers, who are conversing with God in retreat; and, lo! all these late barbarians are as well versed in good breeding and genuine politeness, as the most accomplished boarding-school. They speak low, they moderate their play;—yet, the time seems long, and when their dear Mothers reappear, it is to be overwhelmed with caresses.

Teresa the Huron resolves to make a retreat, in imitation of the nuns. She hides herself in the thicket along the mountain's base, in order to pray for the conversion of her countrymen without ceasing, and to let no one interfere between her and God. Won by her example, the others beg to be allowed to make a retreat, and transforming their school-room into cells, they set about it with such a will, that the nuns must interfere to moderate their fervor.

Were these little Indian girls attached to their Convent home? Let us ask Teresa who had remained more than two years. Oh! the separation was most pain-

ful. But the missionaries were anxious to have the influence of the young seminarist among her countrymen; and her parents could no longer endure her absence. Teresa makes the sacrifice; for she has learned obedience. She leaves her dear Convent Mothers. From Three Rivers, she writes to Mother Mary of the Incarnation :—

My dear Mother,

I am going to my distant home, we are ready to start. I thank you for all the care you have bestowed upon me. I thank you for having taught me to serve God. Is it for a thing of small value that I offer you my thanks? Never shall I forget you. *Teresa.*”

Two days after she had confided her letter to the Rev. Father Du Perron, who was returning to Quebec, she, with all who accompanied her, fell into the hands of the ferocious Iroquois. Faithful to God during her captivity, she continued to instruct and to edify. After three years she was rescued, through the intervention

of the Governor, who made a present for her at the great assembly for the treaty of Peace at Three Rivers (1645).

The good conduct of the seminarists among their own people, was another subject of immense joy, both to the nuns and the missionaries. It was for them to regulate the pious exercises, to say the prayers, to choose the hymns, and to teach the others how to examine their conscience.

Three young girls had been required to follow their parents during the winter chase. On their return, in spring, their first visit was to the Blessed Sacrament; their next to the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, to crown her statue with the flowers they had brought from the woods. Then, entering the Convent, they gave the nuns an account of all they had done during their absence. "Oh, said they, how painful it was to be so long away from holy Mass and the Sacraments!" During the winter, they had written twice to the Superior of the Jesuits, to beg him to send

a priest to their people. The letters passed from hand to hand, and were even carried to the Governor, who, like the others pronounced them admirable for the style and execution, as well as for the sentiments expressed.

But it is time to pause. The reader who has seen how Mother Mary wrote to her intimate friends, will understand how she could say in the second year of her labors : "The Relation will make mention of the seminarists and the consolation they give us, but the truth is, if all were published, it would appear palpable belief. They lose all their barbarity once they are baptized ; and one who has seen them running wild in the forest, cannot without emotion, behold them approach the holy Table, gentle as lambs, to receive the true Lamb of God. No one would have thought that they could be brought to live in the cloister ; yet they do remain willingly and do not leave it without permission."

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seen the *Letters* and the *Relations*, from which we have abridged the above account, would have given unrestricted praise where he has said : "Is it wonderful if the natives were touched by a benevolence which their poverty and squalid misery could not appall ?"

"Their education was attempted ; and the venerable ash-tree still lives beneath which Mother Mary of the Incarnation, so famed for chastened piety, genius, and good judgment, toiled, though [surely *not*] in vain, for the education of the Huron [and other Indian] children."

No ! it cannot be accounted vain or useless to soften the manners of a barbarous race ; to elevate their souls by the knowledge of the high and holy truths of revealed religion ; to teach them to forgive, instead of torturing, a captured foe ; to practise the austere virtues of Christianity, instead of following the instincts of a depraved and degraded nature.

This effect of the instruction given by the Ursulines has already appeared in the

preceding pages; those that follow will prove it still more abundantly, while we behold hundreds of Indian children, as well as men and women, receiving with joy the inestimable boon of Faith, and transmitting it to other poor pagans in the distant forest-wilds of the continent.

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CHAPTER VII.

1642-1650.

EIGHT YEARS IN THE NEW-MONASTERY.

The conversion of the aborigenes, which Mother Mary of the Incarnation, had seen pre-figured as a Church just emerging from clouds and darkness, was now rapidly progressing. On all sides, the mists of error were retiring, and soon whole nations embraced Christianity, with the fervor of the primitive ages. But was this Church

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destined to be perpetuated through a long space of time? Or was it destined to people the heavenly Jerusalem with one rich colony of souls, and then diminish with the nations that formed it?—This latter destiny, Mother Mary foresaw,—as appears by her letters. So much the more ardent, if possible, was her zeal for the welfare of souls, purchased with the blood of Christ; so much the more strenuous her efforts to be useful to them, by opening to them a more spacious “House” where greater numbers of them, could be instructed “unto eternal life.”

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The missionary Fathers often expressed their desire to see the Monastery completed, foretelling that the nuns would have more labor than they could perform, whether for the Indians or for the French population<sup>1</sup>.

That Monastery was, at last, in readiness

<sup>1</sup> Si jamais elles ont une maison bien capable, elles auront plus d'ouvrage qu'elles ne pourront faire. *Relation* 1641.



to receive inhabitants. It was a stately<sup>1</sup> edifice, for the times,—built of dark-colored, roughly-shaped blocks of stone; it was three stories in height, its length being ninety-two feet, and its width twenty-eight.

Three other massive, stone edifices stood within the limits of the city, where the primitive forest yet victoriously disputed for the mastery with the encroachments of civilization. At various distances from these centres, were scattered a certain number of dwelling houses, built, some of hewn pine-timber, some of stone.

Evidently the colonists, if yet few in number, were provided with means of perpetuating the civilization they had brought to these northern wilds.

The Fort would defend them from being cut off by the native barbarians:

<sup>1</sup> Ce Séminaire est un des plus beaux ornemens de la Colonie, et une aide signalée pour l'arrêt et conversion des Sauvages. Leur bâtiment est grand et solide, fait à chaux et à sable.

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the college of the Jesuits and the Monastery of the Ursulines, provided for the wants of their souls and the education of their offspring; the Hospital assured them an asylum for the sick and afflicted.

To the Indians, the new "House of Jesus" was a wonder, worth coming a long way to see. If the little tenement on the wharf, dignified with the name of "Convent," had been to them so precious, was not this a more secure and certain asylum?

The new Monastery might well be called "The House of Jesus;"—no one else could claim to be the proprietor. It had not been built by means of Bazaars or Lotteries, so convenient at the present day, to raise funds when coffers are empty. Neither was it due to the endowments of the Foundress: these barely sufficed for the expenses of the Convent, where, far from exacting payment for board or teaching, food, raiment, and instruction were distributed gratis. The only *banker* known to Mother Mary and her nuns, was Divine

Providence ;—it had not failed them on the present occasion.

With grateful hearts, they prepare to take possession of their new home,—yet it is in a spirit of penance, more than of joy ; as if foreseeing the trials reserved for them, and for their dear neophytes.

The fast of the vigil of the Presentation was a prelude to that of the day of removal, with all its cares and fatigues.

At an early hour, the nuns, preceded by Rev. Father Vimont, and followed by their French pupils and their seminarists were seen climbing the steep mountain path, which led from their little Convent to the Upper Town. Crowds of Indians followed, or awaited the sight among the forest trees along the way. In the cool autumnal atmosphere, in the crisp of the dry leaves that covered the frosty ground there was little to make the morning walk pleasant ; but when they approached the goodly mansion prepared for them all were deeply affected. The poor fore-

children who had never beheld any thing so grand, could not refrain from shouts of admiration, wondering if indeed this "*great cabin*" was to be their home.

But they soon proceeded again quietly, and with recollection; they knew that the holy sacrifice of mass, was to be offered by the revered Father Gabriel Lalemant, who closed the procession, bearing the most Holy Sacrament.—They must think over the hymns they were going to sing, and their good Mothers were preparing for Holy Communion.

Shall we follow them till all kneel in the new Chapel? It is not vastly spacious, since it measures only twenty-eight feet by seventeen, yet it is brilliant with lights, and tapestried for the occasion with red stuffs, borrowed from the store destined to other usages. The "gilded Tabernacle"; the embroidered altar-front; the high-colored pictures; the priest in radiant vestments; the sweet odor from the censer; and the sweeter voices of the little seminarists, mingled with the grave

notes of the pious nuns during the Holy Sacrifice,—all combined to make this First Mass in the Monastery impressive. It was still more so when the future martyr, before distributing the Bread of Life, addressed a few words of exhortation to the fervent Spouses of Christ,—words of one to whom the realities of another world were more present than the passing events of this;—words that came from a heart burning with the love of God, and longing to seal that love with his blood, in the midst of torments.

But let us leave the Chapel, to consider the rest of the premises. The interior of the Convent was still far from being finished. The sound of the saw, the chisel, and the hammer, continued all winter while partitions were completed, doors set, and ceilings made more secure. Four ample fire-places, which, before spring devour one hundred and seventy-five cords of wood, are needed to dissipate the cold. During the night, as a means of keeping from freezing, they have it

vented a sort of chest, to hold the bed, and the sleeper: <sup>1</sup> yet the cold penetrates uncomfortably. To remain away from the fire more than an hour at a time, even well wrapped up, would be a great imprudence.

The long, pine table is served, as heretofore, with "salt-fish and pork" garnished with vegetables, such as the country furnished.

The courageous nuns who never said to sufferings and toil; "That is enough," had only desired their Monastery in order to be more useful. During the following eight years,—that brightest period for the conversion of the poor Indians of Canada,—their labors were incredible. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A similar sort of bedstead is still in use among the peasantry of Canada,—so we have been assured—and is considered a great convenience, for, when folded it takes but half the space of an ordinary bed, serving by day as a seat, *a sofa*!

<sup>2</sup> The *Relation* (1643) says: Elles ont toujours eu un bon nombre de filles sauvages, tant pensionnaires arrêtées que passagères, outre les petites filles

Besides the regular seminarists who, as we have already said, were clothed and fed at the expense of the Convent, and who (as the Relations affirm) amounted to as many as eighty in one year<sup>1</sup>, the nuns were daily called upon to give instruction to Indian women, in their classrooms, and to Indian men at their parlor. Many of these were of the good Christian Indians of Sillery, where there were now (1642-3) from thirty-five to forty families. From this centre the Faith spread throughout the country, from Miscou and Tadoussac, to the canton of the Hurons.

Here, it is the good Charles Meiaskwat.

Françaises, et quantité de sauvages, hommes et femmes, qui les vont souvent visiter et recevoir quelque secours et instruction.

Le parloir de ces bonnes mères sert souvent de classe, les sauvages de dehors y venant exprès le voir, et demander à être instruits, etc. *Rel.* 1643.

<sup>1</sup> Ces bonnes mères qui ont secouru et instruit dans le cours de cette année plus de quatre-vingt filles en divers temps ont vraiment réussi. Le Séminaire est une grande bénédiction pour les Françaises et pour les Sauvages. *Rel.* 1647.

whose zeal transforms him into an apostle, not only for those of his own nation on the Saguenay but even for the Abnakis, on the Kennebec ;—there, it is another of Mother Mary's parlor visitors, the brave chief Noël Negabamat, who knows no greater happiness than to explain the Christian doctrine to all who will listen to him ; again, it is a woman, nearly sixty years of age, who profits so well of the parlor instructions that she, too, becomes a missionary. In the depth of winter she penetrates the forests, and seeks at the distance of many days' journey, a savage tribe who have not yet heard the name of God. Doubtless the Rev. Fathers did not exaggerate the value of such aids as these, when they said : " The Indian who is a good Christian and really zealous, does more good among his countrymen than three Jesuit missionaries."

Warned by the fervid exhortations of these new Apostles, whole tribes, all over the country, were seen moving in the direction of the various missionary sta-



tions,—Tadoussac, Three Rivers, Quebec, the greater number came to the chief French settlement, to see the strange sights it afforded of European buildings and manners, at the same time that it promised them, not only the succor of the “Black robes,” but also of the “Holy Virgins”

The bare enumeration of all these visitors would be tedious. Let it suffice to instance the following: (we quote from the Relations, 1643,) “While the Attikamegues (a tribe of Algonquins from Three Rivers) sojourned at Quebec, they were often to the Ursulines to be instructed entering their parlor with importunity to be taught their prayers or their catechism. After the instructions, the hunger of the poor people must be appeased, so that they occasioned as much expense perhaps as the seminarists themselves.”

At the same time, some of the Abnaki were at Sillery, and were not less eager to be instructed. The following year

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came the Iroquets <sup>1</sup> from the great island of the Allumettes, having passed through the country of their enemies, the Iroquois. "The Iroquets, camped near the Monastery, went every day to their chapel to be instructed by Father Duquen <sup>2</sup>; when sufficiently instructed, they were baptized there. During six weeks, the Ursulines fed this troop of eighty persons, after mass; and again at a later hour, after giving them instruction at their parlor. The women came in their turn, entering the class-room for the same purpose."

<sup>1</sup> Otherwise called *La Nation de l'Isle*.

<sup>2</sup> Plusieurs sauvages de la Nation d'Iroquet s'étant campés assez proche de Québec allaient tous les jours en la Chapelle des Ursulines où le Père Duquen leur faisait l'aumône spirituelle. Au sortir du sermon les Mères donnaient à manger à quatre-vingts personnes, charité qu'elles ont continuée environ six semaines durant. Les femmes venaient encore en d'autres temps et entraient dans la classe des filles sauvages où l'on ne cessait de leur apprendre à prier Dieu; les hommes entraient au parloir pour le même sujet, leur ferveur payait et récompensait la bonté des Mères, etc. *Rel.* 1644.

"During the same year, numbers of Hurons, who remained at Sillery during the winter, were at the Convent every day for instructions. Cold or storm could not deter them; they remained two or three hours at a time, always occupied learning their prayers, or the Christian doctrine. These, as well as the others must have food before they go."

It is needless to multiply quotations;—they would show a similar state of things during the following six years, (to 1650, which is the period under consideration in the present article.

Our readers will have, with us, but one difficulty;—and that is to comprehend how these seven nuns<sup>1</sup>—that was their number until 1644—could suffice for such labor;—instructions, in three languages French, Algonquin, and Huron; cooking distributing food to the family within and strangers without; teaching their s-

<sup>1</sup> They were ten in 1648, besides Madame de Peltrie.

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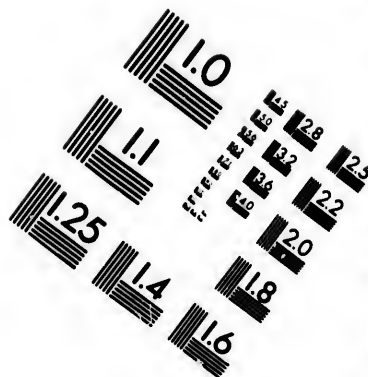
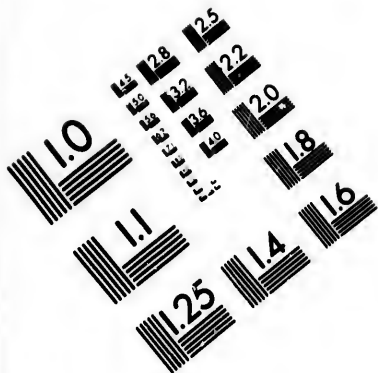
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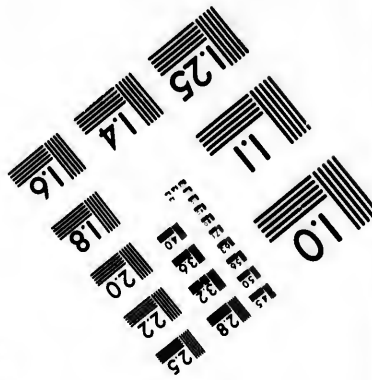
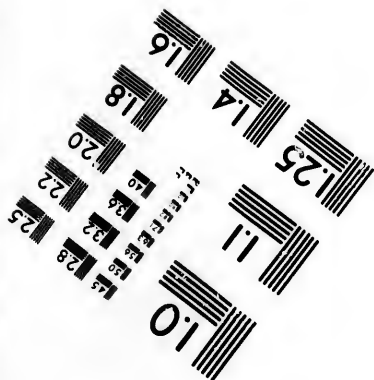
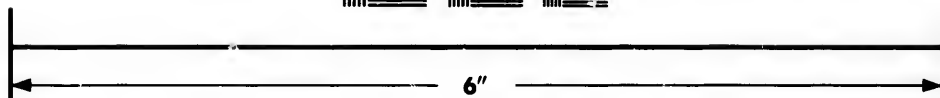
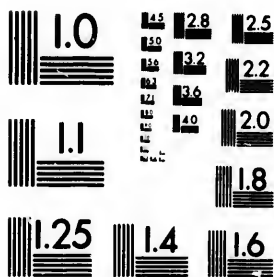
minarists to read, to write, to sew, and clothing them ;—teaching their French pupils, according to their rules, all that is necessary to fit them for the station in society to which they belong ; writing letters to the missionaries and to their friends,—not letters of ceremony, but often of many folio pages :—to say nothing of their religious exercises, which could, by no means, have been neglected.

The letters of Mother Mary of the Incarnation during this period are most characteristic. It is not of *her* seminarists, *her* labors and toils that she chiefly entertains her friends. O, no ! In her vast charity, she identifies herself with all who labor for the conversion of the Indians. She surveys the field of missionary labor, from Labrador to the Great Lakes ; she counts the chapels that are built, the number of baptisms, the holy deaths. She knows all the nomadic tribes that come to be instructed. She shares the perils of the Missionary, his enthusiasm, and his longings for martyrdom. After filling





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eight or twelve pages with topics like those, she adds :—" A word now of our seminarists ;—they give us every possible satisfaction. Their piety, their devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, their docility, their generosity in overcoming their defects,—all this is ravishing ; yet it strikes us less now that we are accustomed to it." —At other times she merely says ; " God has blessed our labors this year as on the preceding ones : we have as much as we can do, especially during the winter months, when the braves leave us their children while they go to hunt."

As to the other incidents of Convent life, having once entered into some details, her pen refuses to reiterate them.

Later, when the country from Quebec to lake Huron, becomes one great arena where scenes, at once distressing and consoling, are enacted, she suffers with those that suffer, rejoices in all that conduces to the glory of God, and helps to obtain by her prayers, that abundance of



grace which was poured out so copiously upon the new Christians, who often had to pass from the waters of baptism, to the fire their enemies had enkindled around their habitations.

Taking up to the thread of our narrative, we should record, in the autumn of 1643, the return of Madame de la Peltrie from Montreal, where she had accompanied Miss Mance, the foundress of the Hospital of Ville-Marie, eighteen months previous. Great was the joy at the Convent, both among the nuns and the little seminarists some of whom, being "old scholars" had not failed to pray for the dear Lady's return, every day during her absence.

The Foundress was not an idle spectator of the laborious occupations of the nuns. It was her right, she insisted, to prepare the little Indian girls for Convent-life, where cleanliness is a first principle. The amount of scrubbing with soap and warm water it required, together with the long and patient use of the comb and the scissors, to prepare these little greasy creat-

ures for their new garments, was not sufficient to disconcert her. She loved also to conduct them, for a holiday, to Sillery, where the parents of many of the seminarists lived. Like so many "birds set free" they would fly to their various lodges, passing the time in romping, playing with their little brothers and sisters, around their mothers. But when the signal of departure was given, from every side, they would hasten, gathering around their *mingay*, darling Mother, embracing her with more affection than their own parents.

That small tenement, known as Madame de la Peltrie's house, and which in fact, twice served to shelter the entire Community, was erected after her return from Montreal.

From the year 1646, it is within the Monastery, occupying through choice the last place among the sisterhood, and sharing all their privations, that we shall find the good Foundress, enjoying in seclusion, that peace of mind which is the reward of the upright of heart.

Other laborers came in, from time to time, to share the hardships and the joys of the pioneers. A lay sister from the Monastery of Dieppe arrived before the nuns had quitted their little Convent on the wharf. It was the good Sr. St. Laurent, who proved a real treasure to the Community. The Ursulines of Ploërmel sent one of their number, Mother Marie-Anne of the Seraphim; Tours sent two,—Mothers Anne of St. Cecilia, and Anne of Notre-Dame. The venerable Archbishop of Tours was happy to contribute once more to the welfare of the Convent he had blessed so heartily, and sent out his own carriage to convey the two new missionaries as far as Poitiers. Mother St. Cecilia, after sharing some years the abundant privations and trials of the little Community, returned to her Monastery in France. Mother Anne de Notre-Dame, although feeble and suffering, persevered, and rendered service in the classes, both French and Algonquin.

In 1645, Mother Mary of the Incarnation .

joyfully resigned the office of Superioress to Mother St. Athanasius. Announcing the result of the elections to her son, she says : "Our dear Lord has made our hearts one, so that we can differ neither in our views, nor our desires. We have elected our Rev. Mother St. Athanasius, an excellent religious of the Congregation of Paris, who has such a spirit of union and charity, that she would suffer death rather than disturb the peace that dwells with us."

In the following year, Miss Charlotte Barré, who had accompanied Madame de la Peltrie to Canada only on condition to be permitted to embrace the religious state, commenced her noviciate, on the feast of the Presentation, with Catherine Lezeau, the latter as a lay sister. Both persevered, and pronounced their vows after the usual probation of two years, having taken the names of St. Ignatius and St. Ursula.

Thus, the cloistered family in 1648, consisted of eight professed choir nuns, and two lay sisters. Before the close of

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the year (Dec. 2d), a lady from the *great world*, Miss Philippa-Gertrude de Boulogne, sister of Madame d'Ailleboust, joined the little Community of Ursulines.

The triennial election of a Superioress was made again in June (1648), *in pace et benedictione*<sup>1</sup>, resulting in the continuation of the same Rev. Mother in the office. Without anticipating more upon a future page, let it at least be said, that Mother St. Athanasius was one of those remarkable women, whose precious and noble qualities have entitled her to the lasting esteem and gratitude of the Community, which she continued to govern alternately with Mother Mary of the Incarnation, as long as both were spared. This served to cement indissolubly the union between the two congregations of Paris and Tours, represented about equally for many years in the Monastery of Quebec.

<sup>1</sup> Thus marked in the *Journal des Jésuites*.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**1640-1652.**

### MOTHER ST. JOSEPH AND THE HURONS.

From the Huron country to Quebec, by the circuitous water-route, it was a distance of, at least, nine hundred miles. But to the Redman of America, long journeys were not more expensive than his daily life. While his canoe glided stealthily along under the deep shadows of the overhanging forests, he knew on what banks to find the wild berries, the succulent roots ; or, if his foot startled the deer and the wild fowl from their covert, the quick arrow brought him his bill of fare, without a reckoning. Besides, there were strange sights to be seen, down where the white man had set his great fort on the top of a mountain ;—there were “ big canoes ” with wings ; there was

a Captain of the Day [a clock] that told the Frenchman when to eat, and when to sleep :—in fine, beautiful beads to make wampum ; robes of bright colors ; bowls and ladles that would not burn, could be procured for beaver skins and other furs, of which the Indian had an abundance.

These were some of the motives that, in 1637, had brought to the city of Champlain, one hundred and fifty canoes, bearing six or seven hundred of the tall, well-built, swarthy braves, from the north shores of Lake Huron. From Point-Levis to the opposite cliffs of Quebec, the channel of the St. Lawrence was alive with their fantastic barks, each containing four or five savage warriors, their shoulders covered with shaggy hides ; their visages glowing with paint of various colors ; their long, naked arms, vigorously swaying the paddle.

This was the first time so large a number of these allies of the French, had appeared at Quebec. In the following years, their visits were renewed ; and

generally corresponded to the expected arrival of mercantile vessels from France. In 1639, there were stranger sights than ever. The Christian Huron, Joseph Chihatenhwa, who after his baptism had lived like a saint, was animated with new fervor. Returning from his journey he went from "town to town, preaching with heavenly eloquence" and publishing what he had seen. "Ah! said he, if you only knew what charity there is among those who believe in God, you would never remain in your superstitions. Even among those who have never seen each other, there is but one heart and one mind. The daughters of Sachems who have crossed the great Sea, to live in Quebec, have come for the love of us. When they arrived, there was such rejoicing, you would have said that all the people of Quebec were one. Oh! how far are we from resembling them."

In the following spring, Joseph sent to the Convent his young niece, the charming Teresa, whom we have already men-



tioned. Mother St. Joseph, in the meantime, had studied the Huron with such success that she was able to converse with Teresa, and with the braves who were with her. Soon Teresa was joined by other young Huron girls; and not an Indian of the nation could come to Quebec without seeing the wonderful, "Wise Virgin" who could speak their language.

The holy nun, so rich in the gifts of grace that we forget her noble birth, and all her rare accomplishments, was to the poor Indians, an angel from heaven; her words were their law; her influence irresistible. Her name was known throughout the Huron country. Those who had never been in Quebec, knew the *Mother of the Hurons*, the *holy Virgin*, as well as those who had been instructed by her in the faith<sup>1</sup>. From the time Teresa, the niece of the great medicine-man, with some companions, had entered, there was

<sup>1</sup> *Relations*, 1642. Il ne descend aucun Sauvage à Québec qui ne veuille voir les filles Vierges.

constantly a class of young Huron girls at the Convent.

There are amusing anecdotes related of the childlike simplicity of some of the Huron braves.

One of the neophytes of Mother St. Joseph<sup>1</sup> being invited by his companions to join them in the winter's chase, declined giving a decided answer, saying that he wished to consult his directress; upon which the other replied contemptuously "You are not a man, but a woman!" The poor neophyte felt the reproach keenly, but stifled his anger, and came to recount his trials to Mother St. Joseph. He was exhorted to bear the reproach patiently, as became a good Christian, who should know how to love his enemies. He replies with a sigh: "That I will do, but, O Mother! you do not know how hard it is for a man to be called a woman."

The brave Jean-Baptiste had another

<sup>1</sup> Let. of M. M. of the Incarnation.

difficulty; he was at Quebec with all his family, and lived by the hospitality of the nuns. One day, as he was going out to hunt, some of his fellows refused him what they had promised to furnish. In his disappointment, he uttered some words of impatience. Perceiving his fault immediately, he wished to confess it; but his confessor was absent. There was still a resource left; he comes to see Mother St. Joseph, tells her what has happened, asking her to tell his confessor, when she would see him, that Jean-Baptiste had sinned, but that he was extremely sorry, and begged God to pardon him.

Often the pagan Hurons, decided by their visit to Quebec to become Christians, remained many months, coming every day to the Convent to be instructed. One of these, whom Mother St. Joseph was instructing, was invited by the Algonquins to join them in a hunt. He consults the Mother, who tells him if he is in no hurry to be baptized, she sees no reason why he should not go; but if, on the contrary, he

desires that grace very ardently, it would be better to remain and continue to be instructed.

Upon that, he replies with resolution : "It is decided that I shall not go. Certainly, my chief business here is to get baptized,—I seek no other riches than that of being the child of God." He kept his word ; received the grace of baptism some weeks later, and still remained in Quebec, till Mother St. Joseph had prepared him for a fervent first Communion.

The assiduity of the Huron neophytes to the parlor instructions, which lasted two or three hours when needed, has already been noticed ; but we have not mentioned another tie between the poor Indians and their *Mother*. By letters to her parents, Mother St. Joseph obtained abundant supplies for these poor people, whom she had adopted, and whom she cherished like her own family.

At the time she commenced her intercourse with the Hurons, there were thirteen missionaries in their country, laboring

with a zeal capable of inspiring the most callous with admiration.

But the relentless Iroquois, those Romans of the New World, had vowed the destruction of another Carthage,—with atrocious pertinacity they pursued their plan, until the Land of the Hurons was a land of desolation.

The hour of distress proved the hour of salvation. While misfortunes of every kind were upon them, famine, pestilence, war, in its most horrid forms,—conversions multiplied. Crowds, that had long deferred renouncing their superstitions, hastened to demand baptism.

The missionaries, after passing through such trials as belong to the most heroic confessors of the Faith, the ordeal of fire and torture in every form which fiends could invent, left upon the list of martyrs the names forever glorious of Daniel, Garnier, Chabanel, Brebœuf and Lalemant,<sup>1</sup>—all personal friends of the Ursulines.

<sup>1</sup> The *Letters* of Mother Mary contain lengthy and interesting details of the labors, sufferings and combats

No one in the Colony, perhaps, followed with more interest than Mother St. Joseph the different stages of that sad drama, destined to close by the extinction of the Huron name ; and when, in the summer

of these martyrs. In them we easily follow the progress of the faith, from the time that the holy Jogues offered his life for the conversion of these poor pagans, and was accepted (1646). We read in 1648, "Huit à neuf cents Hurons baptisés p. 439. In 1649, detailing all the cruel circumstances of the martyrdom of Rev. Fathers Brebeuf and G. Lalement, who had grown old in the Apostolic Missions among the savages, she adds : F. Brebeuf had the consolation of seeing seven or eight thousand baptized before his death, many of them by aspersion. While the Iroquois were burning, massacring, and destroying, the Hurons were no longer rebellious. 2,700 were baptized, the year following :—these were dispersed, when they were not massacred. One of these exiled bands came to Quebec, where they subsisted by the charity of the three religious Communities, and other benevolent persons. In August 1650, there were 600 Christian Indians at Quebec.

Twenty-nine missionaries had labored for the conversion of the Hurons : seven of these had perished by the hand of violence. *Letters*, p. 441 to 450.

of 1650, the last miserable remnant of a people that had lately reckoned 35,000 souls, set up their poor camp-huts within view of the Monastery, no heart bled with a deeper wound than hers. Mother Mary of the Incarnation says it was her death-blow.

Soon they gathered around her, in troops of forty or fifty at a time,—as many as the parlor-class, and later the bark cabin could hold—men, women and children. Mother St. Joseph had the secret of consoling them,—fortifying them with holy instructions, and inspiring them with sentiments of Christian resignation.

From the Huron seminarists, in captivity among the Iroquois, the nuns had most consoling accounts. One of Mother St. Joseph's pupils, who had been carried off in 1643, at the age of thirteen or fourteen, was married, and thus had become mistress of one of those "Long Houses" where several families lived together. After ten years of captivity, the missionary not only found her firm in the faith, but

she had gained others to worship her God, and pray with her.

Such instances,—and they were not unfrequent,—show the value of the instructions given by the nuns. The bright wave, once set forward, ran multiplying in widening circles, under the eye of Him who blessed it, in numbers that will be known only in heaven.

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## CHAPTER IX.

**1650.**

### ONE NIGHT, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

The year 1650, so fertile in trials and disasters, was drawing to a close. A clear, cold, December evening, was brooding over the glistening landscape. The great constellations which light the wintry



firmament with splendor, were there, marking the progress of the night. The dark form of the Monastery, looked not gloomy, for the ruddy glow of the casements told of cheerful fires, and cheerful faces within. There was even the sound of merriment; for this was the hour of recreation.

One who had gained admittance on that evening, would have found the cloistered inmates unbent from labor, enjoying in genial intercourse the social hour. Adjoining the Chapel and Choir, was the Community Hall,—not very spacious,—which the nuns had just entered, leaving the small refectory, with the usual ejaculation : “ *Deus det nobis suam pacem.*” God give us His peace! That peace was there, in the depth of their souls. We saw it in their countenances, as with words of gentle greeting they unfold already their parcels, — knitting, sewing, mending,—and take their seats around a plain centre-table, where burn two candles.

We have seen them all before.—It is Reverend Mother St. Athanasius, Superiororess, who has labored on the arduous mission, ten years ; it is the pale and worn, yet gay and energetic Mother St. Joseph, Assistant ; here is also Mother Mary of the Incarnation, Depositary, the tutelary genius of all ;—Mothers St. Croix, Anne de Ste. Cecile, Anne de Notre-Dame, Mother St. Ignatia have come in. The three lay sisters, St. Laurent, St. Ursula and St. Michael<sup>1</sup> with the poor Indian widow, Cecile Arenhatsi, have still the company of the late “lady of the castle,” Miss de Boulogne, now called Mother St. Dominic, in the kitchen below, where there is work to be done.

In the hall adjoining the Community, the largest in the house, the Indian girls are in frolicsome glee. Mother Anne of the Seraphim is in their midst, when Madame de la Peltrie enters, and there is

<sup>1</sup> Françoise Capel, novice of the white veil, who remained only a few months.

a general rush to be near the *Ningay*, dear Mother, who never comes to them without giving and receiving pleasure. "New years is coming," they remind her, and she with pretended gravity, does not understand the allusion;—yet we know she has counted well her little seminarists, that no one may be forgotten in her loving distribution of presents on New Year's morning<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The custom of New Year's visits, and *presents* too, in these early times has become known to us through the private Journal of the Jesuits, lately given to the public. One example will suffice, as a picture of the cordiality that reigned among the inhabitants of New France. The date we select is:—"Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> 1646. The soldiers went to salute the Governor with their guns; the inhabitants presented their compliment in a body. He was beforehand with us and came here at seven o'clock to wish us a happy New Year, addressing each of the Fathers one after another. I returned his visit after Mass. (Another time we must be beforehand with him.) M. Giffard also came to see us. The Hospital nuns sent us a letter of compliment early in the morning; the Ursulines also, with beautiful presents, wax-candles, rosaries, a crucifix, and at dinner, two excellent

But the hour is waning; let us look into the French class-room, where Mother St. Clara presides at the evening recreation. It is above stairs. We have not lists complete, but we can name: the Misses de

pigeon-pies. I sent them two images, in enamel, of St. Ignatius and St. F. Xavier. We gave to M. Giffard, the life of Our Lord, by F. Bonnet; to M. des Châtelets, a little volume of Drexellius, on Eternity; to M. Bourdon, a telescope and compass; and to others, reliquaries, rosaries, medals, images, etc. We gave a crucifix to the woman who washes the Church linen, a bottle of rum to Abraham, and four handkerchiefs to his wife; some books of devotion to others and two handkerchiefs to Robert Hache; he asked for more and we gave them to him.

I went to see M. Giffard, M. Couillard and Made-moiselle de Repentigny. The Ursulines sent to beg I would come and see them before the end of the day. I went; and paid my compliments also to Madame de la Peltrie, who had sent us presents. I was near leaving this out, which would have been a great oversight. At home, I gave to our Fathers and Brothers what I thought they would like best. I had given beforehand to F. De Quen for Sillery, all he chose to take from my room, and a choice present for Father Masse." *Journal*, p. 24.

Repentigny, Misses Elizabeth and Mary Couillard, Juchereau de More, Le Tardif, Marsolet, de la Poterie, Bourdon, Hayot, Hertel, Godefroy, Misses Madeleine and Geneviève Chavigny, Porchet, Nicolet, as being probably of the number. Gay and happy as young girls can be, let them with thoughts of piety, sink to rest. Has not their Mother just told them of the fervor of their little rivals, in the hall below ? They will not believe that because they are more privileged than these little forest girls, who have but lately known the good God who made them, they should be less grateful or less pious.

The hour of silence is proclaimed by the bell at seven ; then for a half-hour are heard the grave and solemn tones of the recitation of the Divine office. It is the evening tribute of the Spouse of Christ, as the deputed organ of the Church, offering to Heaven for all creatures a few notes of that perpetual hymn which circulates around the terrestrial

orb; a hymn of adoration, praise, and love <sup>1</sup>.

When all had sunk to rest within that peaceful mansion, there was something that *did not sleep*.—It was a pan of coals, which a Sister, charged with the baking, had placed beneath her bread-trough, well closed round with the napkin that covered the dough. It was not her habit to take this precaution to hasten the action of the yeast; but this was bread for New-Year's; she would have it light. The coals thus set on duty, were unperceived, and, alas! forgotten.

All slept, but—the fire. That began by the pine box, soon well heated; then the flames circulated to all within the baking-room; to the cellar beyond, and its stores; to the pine beams and floor, overhead. Suddenly, Mother Mary of the Seraphim starts, as by a voice calling to her: “Haste,

<sup>1</sup> For all that follows, see *Lettres de la M. Marie de l'Incarnation*; the scene that precedes is, of course, supposed.

—awaken your children, or they will be burned alive." She leaps to her feet; the flames were bursting through the floor into the room, where they all were sleeping. She shrieks: "Up for your lives, children, fly;"—and she rushes to the dormitory to cry: "Wake! wake! the house is on fire. Quick, and save the children." In a moment, all are aware of the danger; the fire was upon them on all sides. One rushes to the bell, to give warning of their peril. Mother Superior, with admirable presence of mind, seizes the keys, and opens the doors; Mother Assistant and Sr. St. Laurent break down the grating, to afford egress to those who are in the second story. Some of the Sisters, thinking the fire might be still arrested, run in the direction of the cistern for water: Mother Mary calls to them that it is in vain; they must only think of saving themselves and the children. The smoke and flames were quicker than words: the dormitory where the little ones were, was already on fire.

Sr. St. Ignatia, at the peril of her life, breaks in and hurries them out,—when the floor gives way. The other sisters seize the little innocents in their arms and bear them off to a place of safety, returning several times, regardless of the danger of suffocation or of being enveloped in the flames.

Mother Mary of the Incarnation had grasped the papers of the Community, and attempted to save some clothing for the Sisters, who had all rushed from the house with the children, in their night dresses. She was alone in the midst of the flaming mass; the fire was consuming the rooms beneath; another had seized upon the timbers of the roof, over her head; and a third was following upon her steps, as after bowing to her crucifix to acquiesce in the holy will of God, she flew along the passage of the dormitory, leading through the parlor, to a stair-case,—the only issue now possible. Happily, it was free, although she encountered another danger from the melting bell, di-

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rectly over her way. At the door, she meets the Rev. Father Superior of the Jesuits and all his household, hurrying to the rescue. The Chapel alone was not yet in flames. They had time to save the Blessed Sacrament, and such of the Sacred vestments as were in the vestry adjoining, yet not without imminent peril.

But were all indeed safe? Had it been possible in that brief space of time, between the first alarm and Mother Mary's egress from the house, which she measures by the length of the "Miserere"—some five or six minutes—to transport all the household to a place of safety? Had no one been forgotten?—anguishing questions were these to Rev. Mother St. Athanasius, who having hastened down to open the doors, had not returned, knowing that it would be of no avail. The others had taken flight in the opposite direction, and when poor Mother Superior, shivering there upon the snow, endures a mortal agony within her soul, and calls her sisters by name, no one answers.

Casting herself upon her knees, she makes a vow to the Blessed Virgin,—and waits.

At last, the children discover her and gather around; Mother Mary too and all the sisters are there. Poor Cecile had cast herself from a window in the third story upon an icy frozen path—but she was only stunned. Little Genevieve, alas! was missing still;—it is agony for all.

But the good angels were busy;—Genevieve did not perish;—she was safe, though found only after a two hours' search. Higher and higher rise the flames, wreathing through that wooden roof; the heavy timbers bend, and fall with a crash: it is the brightness of mid-day on this midnight scene, while the cold, silent stars look down unmoved.

But while that doomed mansion is sinking there in a glowing, seething furnace, where are its late happy inmates? On the cold snow-bank, clustered close to keep those little children warm, they kneel;—calm, though pale,—so calm that one of

the spectators cries: "Surely, those women are mad! or they have an exceeding love of God."

Friends surround them now, and cover them with their rough garments;—they bear off the children;—the little Indian girls to the nearest shelter;—the French children, to their own homes. Madame de la Peltrie, in her night tunic and bare-footed until she gets the loan of shoes and a mantle, shudders in the night air, as she hurries, with the nuns, all in a similar plight down the street to the Jesuits, the nearest inhabited house.

Great were the pity and grief of the spectators, both French and Indians, though powerless to stop the progress of the conflagration. They wept with compassion for the misfortunes of those heroic souls who had never toiled for themselves;—or they were moved to tears to behold the angelic composure of those victims of a calamity so sudden and so terrible.

The dispositions of the nuns on the

night of the conflagration, may be divined by those of Mother Mary herself;—for we know that there was but one heart and mind among them. “My heart, she writes, preserved its usual peace; I felt neither grief nor anxiety, but united my will to His, whose Hand has passed over us, leaving us in the state in which He was Himself at this season in the cave of Bethlehem.”

Early the next morning, the friendly nuns of the Hospital sent their steward with a pressing invitation to accept hospitality with them. The Governor, on the other hand, had ordered preparations to be made for them at the Castle. The nuns were grateful to both;—but naturally preferring the Monastery of the Hospital, to the Governor’s Residence, they were soon in the arms of their dear sisters, the *Hospitalières*,—who shed abundant tears, while they welcomed them so cordially to their home. The extent of the misfortune was sufficiently evident by the condition in which they were forced

to present themselves : wrapped round in borrowed mantles, and still shivering with the cold they had endured in the night Straightway, the kind hosts brought apparel from their wardrobe, and the whole community of Ursulines were transformed to Hospital nuns, dear Madame de la Peltrie with the rest.

In the course of the day, the Governor with Rev. F. Ragueneau came to convey to the scene of the disaster, the Superioress of the Ursulines, Mother Mary of the Incarnation, Madame de la Peltrie and Mother St. Joseph.

That smoking heap of stones was a sad spectacle ! There had perished, not only the fruit of ten years' solicitude and toil, but also the six months' store for themselves and their seminarists, a part of it due to the charity of their friends in France ;—their provisions for the rest of the winter ; their clothing and beds ; the furniture of their chapel and school-rooms ;—all, in fine, that they had amassed for the service of the poor Indians, and for

their own subsistence; all had been consumed in the space of two hours. Madame de la Peltrie had lost every thing as well as the nuns.

The New-Year's greeting, so cordial in those early times that even to read of it is refreshing, must have given occasion to many touching expressions of sympathy. The nuns were at least safely lodged, for the time-being. Nothing which the most delicate and ingenious charity could suggest, was omitted on the part of the dear Hospital Sisters, to alleviate their distress. During three weeks, with indefatigable zeal, these "friends in need" furnished materials, and aided in putting together, complete suits of apparel for each of the Ursulines.

The two Communities made but one:—seated at the same table; sleeping under the same roof, and reciting the Holy Office together;—but can Ursulines live without having little children around them? Evidently not. Already the vacant house of Madame de la Peltrie has been

examined, and the offer of the good Foundress accepted. The nuns<sup>1</sup> soon remove thither, bearing with them the generous gifts of their benefactresses; and the not less generous loan of at least 500 livres worth of commodities, necessary for a bare commencement. They bore above all and bequeathed to their successors, an inexhaustible fund of gratitude for unbounded hospitality.

Among the many marks of sympathy the Ursulines received while they were the guests of the generous Hospital nuns, perhaps none touched them more than the visit of condolence from their poor Hurons. Assembled in one of the large halls of the Hospital, their chief, Louis Taicœronk, opened his harangue as follows:

<sup>1</sup> The nuns, on their way *home* visit the College of the Jesuits, the Castle St. Louis and the Parish Church. *Jour. des Jés.*

On the 13th Feb. the chronicler has written: *Les Ursulines se renferment*, signifying that they begin to observe again the rule of cloister.

"Holy Virgins: You behold here a miserable skeleton, which was once a living, happy people. Our flesh has been devoured by war and by famine. These poor bones only held together through your benevolence and compassion.<sup>1</sup> Consider our sad fate, and you will see that we have every reason to weep for ourselves a torrent of tears. Alas! the friends that kept us from utter destruction have become like us, and their affliction renews all our distress. Must it be said that we have seen that great House of Jesus, the House of Charity, reduced to ashes in a moment?

<sup>1</sup> The *Relation*, 1650, giving an account of the desolation of the Huron country, and the arrival of a band of the fugitives at Quebec, explains these words of the Huron chief: Les Ursulines avec leur bonne fondatrice Madame de la Peltrie, ont entrepris en cette rencontre au-dessus de leur forces, mais non pas au-dessus de leur confiance qu'elles ont en Dieu: elles se chargèrent incontinent d'une famille très-nombreuse, [la famille de Teondechoren, oncle de notre Thérèse]. Leur séminaire fut ouvert à de petites filles, qui accrurent leur nombre, et le zèle de ces bonnes mères ne se trouvant quasi de bornes, leurs Classes s'ouvrirent aussi à quantité d'externes, qu'elles instruisent du catéchisme, en langue Huronne, et auxquelles elles donnent à manger, étendant ainsi leur charité en même temps sur les corps et sur les âmes.



We have seen the fire pursue, without respect, your sacred persons ! In that conflagration we beheld again our own houses, our towns and country in flames. Alas ! must the fire follow the poor Huron wherever he goes ? Weep, Oh ! weep my brethren, weep with me the misfortunes which were ours, and which have become the portion of these innocent Virgins. Holy Virgins : lo ! you are reduced to the same extremity as your poor Hurons, for whom your compassion was so great. You have no more a country, a home, nor a hope, but in heaven where you have placed all your desire.

We have come hither to console you, and before entering this hall we entered your hearts to see what was your greatest affliction, in order to seek a remedy. If we were addressing persons like ourselves, our customs would lead us to offer you a present to dry your tears, and another to restore your courage ; but we see that your courage has not failed ; and as to tears, you have not shed one for your misfortunes. Your eyes are not fixed upon any thing lower than heaven, where your treasures are.

Thus, our presents are superfluous. There is but one evil to be apprehended, and that threatens us more than you. It is the effect which the

news of this deplorable accident will have upon your friends in France. They will be more touched by it than you are, and will call loudly for your return. How can a mother read without tears the letter that will tell her that her daughter is without food or clothing, bed or lodging,—in fine, without any of the comforts of life? The first thought of these poor mothers will be to recall you, that they may have the consolation of relieving your distress. A brother would do the same for his sister; an uncle for his niece; thus we are in danger of losing you, and of being deprived of the aid we hoped to continue to enjoy, in having our daughters instructed in the Faith.

Courage, holy Virgins! Do not suffer yourselves to be overcome by the tenderness of your relatives. Let it be seen that the charity you have for us, is stronger than the ties of nature! To fortify your resolution in this respect, here is a present [a wampum belt of twelve hundred grains] to fix your feet so firmly on the soil that no love of home or country will be able to remove them.

The second present [another belt] which we beg you to accept, is to lay the foundations of another House of Jesus, a House of Prayer, where you may again instruct our children. These are

the desires of our hearts ; doubtless they are yours also ; for you would not die happy if you could reproach yourselves that through too tender a love for your parents you had lost the opportunity of aiding in procuring the salvation of so many souls whom you love in God, and who will one day be your crown in heaven."

Doubtless, this harangue has lost by the double translation, much of the vivid coloring it had in its native dress, yet it shows how sincere was their attachment to the Faith, and to all who contributed to their instruction.

## CHAPTER X.

**1650-1652.**

### COURAGE IN ADVERSITY.

Had the Ursulines been of only moderate utility to the Colony, whether for aiding in converting the Indians, or in diffusing the blessings of instruction and education among the rising generation of French Canadians, the conjuncture was favorable to allow them to retire. Ten years were sufficient for an experiment ; and had there been a want of success, the nuns themselves, after all the hardships they had endured, and all the uncertainties before them, had a right to desist from their enterprise without being taxed with pusillanimity. Spring vessels, bringing them the usual succor, would have enabled them to defray the expenses of their passage home. That they would have been

cordially welcomed by their different Communities, was evident from the pressing invitations they had already received to quit the country on account of the Indian warfare, and the precarious state of the colony.

These invitations were still more urgent when tidings of the conflagration of the Monastery had reached their friends in France.

No one conversant with the early History of Canada is ignorant how critical was the state of affairs, and how gloomy the prospect during the years that followed the dispersion of the Hurons. The Iroquois, flushed by his dire success, dazzled by the fires that had consumed his victim, had not paused to rest him, in the solitude he had made. Throughout the land, he was busy ; here, to cut off a still flying band of Hurons ; there, to scalp the trembling Algonquin ;—and everywhere to beset the French, and confine them within their forts. The ubiquitous Iroquois seemed destined to remain sole

master of a devastated country. Two thousand Frenchmen, scattered along the St Lawrence, at the various settlements and trading posts, were but a handful, compared to the Hurons destroyed; and their importance to the mother country depended chiefly on the fur-trade with the Indians, which the Iroquois intercepted <sup>1</sup>.

All this was well known to the nuns; but they were all determined to persevere, and share the fate of the Colony, whose interests they had espoused. "How could we abandon our Christian neophytes?" says Mother Mary of the Incarnation. They are our treasures, our spiritual children, for whom we are ready to die a million of times. And what will become of our dear French girls without instruc-

<sup>1</sup> Les flottes des Hurons ne descendent plus à la traite; les Algonquins sont dépeuplés, et les nations plus éloignées se retirent encore plus loin, craignant le feu des Iroquois.

Le magasin de Montréal n'a pas acheté des sauvages un seul castor depuis un an. *Rel.*

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tion, without culture? No! we are not so cowardly as to betray our trust or abandon our post. Our enemies are powerful, but God is greater than they."

The resolution of the nuns was applauded by the public. In an assembly of the principal citizens and the Jesuit Fathers, presided by the Governor D'Ailleboust, it was decided to offer them a loan, free of interest for six years, and to aid them as far as possible in rebuilding their Monastery <sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The *Relation* says: Le feu avait fait un holocauste tout entier de leurs habits, de leur maison, de tous leurs meubles et des aumônes, dont depuis dix ans on avait taché de soulager une partie de leurs nécessités. La perte a été grande, mais ces bonnes mères n'ont pas perdu leur confiance en Dieu. . . . Le désir qui les presse de se mettre en état de faire en ce pays ce que leur zèle y est venu chercher pour le salut des âmes; l'espérance qui leur fait croire que voulant tout souffrir et tout faire pour Dieu, il fera tout pour elles: ces raisons, dis-je, les ont obligées saintement à rebâtir de nouveaux édifices. . . . Nous les y avons assistées de toutes nos forces. . . . Tout le pays a intérêt à leur établissement, principalement à

This decision taken, let us return to the "Bethlehem" of the Ursulines to take note of some of the comforts and conveniences. The mansion, built probably on the model of other small dwelling-houses of the city, was two stories high, thirty feet in length and twenty in breadth. These were narrow limits for thirteen persons,<sup>1</sup> to whom a chapel and a class-

cause de leur séminaire; car l'expérience fait voir que les filles qui ont été aux Ursulines s'en ressentent toute leur vie, et que dans leur ménage la crainte de Dieu y règne davantage, et qu'elles y élèvent bien mieux leurs enfants.

In the same article Rev. F. Ragueneau mentions a school for boys: On a commencé cette année (1651) un séminaire, où les enfants sont en pension sous un honnête homme. . . . Ils viennent en classe au Collège. Sans cela nos français deviendraient sauvages, et auraient moins d'instruction que les sauvages mêmes.

<sup>1</sup> The *Relation* mentions in addition to the "treize personnes qui composent leur communauté, quelques pensionnaires dont leur charité n'a pu se dispenser, nonobstant les incommodités presque intolérables qu'il leur a fallu souffrir, principalement dans les chaleurs étouffantes de l'été, et dans une pauvreté qui les a réduites à avoir besoin de toutes choses.



room were as indispensable as a dining-room and a dormitory. Their ingenuity and their patience, having already been tasked in a similar manner, made them at home in their new domicile. Beds were arranged, one above another, for themselves and for some little boarders, probably orphans; — a board partition screened off a little chapel. A sort of rustic arbor, covered on all sides with bark, in the Huron style of architecture as before, gave them an additional classroom for their neophytes.

Their poverty, which excited universal compassion, reduced them to receive alms from such as would have been succored by them, in better days. One would bring a towel, a chemise, or a cloak; another presented a chicken, a few eggs, or a loaf of bread.

“The Jesuit Fathers, says mother Mary, sent us the stuffs destined to their own use to clothe us; they gave us provisions, linen, and blankets for our beds. They lent us the services of their lay brethen

and their workmen, to aid in the building. The Governor also and his wife, Madame D'Ailleboust, succored us in many ways. In short, all our friends showed themselves so compassionate and obliging that we have no words sufficient to express our gratitude. If the poverty of our Colonists is great, their charity is greater."

In the mean-time they sought to resume the labors of the Institute, in favor of the young French girls, as well as the Indians.

The snow had not yet fully disappeared from the ground, when the nuns were seen clearing away, with their own hands, the rubbish that covered the charred foundations, in preparation for the work of the masons. On the 18th of May, in presence of the Governor, and a goodly company, another foundation-stone was blessed by Rev. Father Lalement, and deposited, with the usual ceremonies, by Madame de la Peltrie. All the workmen that could be obtained, were employed ;

and the walls rose so rapidly that some hopes were entertained of inhabiting them the following winter.

But the short summer passed too quickly<sup>1</sup>;—autumn came, and the long winter

<sup>1</sup> Mother Mary of the Incarnation tells us how the nuns managed to live after the burning of the Convent. The spring vessels bringing them only the usual supplies when they were in need of everything their Chaplain, Rev. Mr. Vignal, undertook to provide for their subsistence by cultivating their land. He took laborers with him, and set them the example, by toiling early and late. God so blessed his charity and his labor, that they harvested wheat peas and barley in sufficient quantity for the forty persons that composed the family of that year. "We have a double team of oxen for our labor and six cows that furnish us with milk and butter." Rev. M. Vignal continued his charitable care of the Community until 1657, when he joined the Sulpicians.

Mother M. of the Incarnation says: "Notre Communauté avait des obligations infinies à ce bon prêtre. Outre l'accomplissement des devoirs spirituels de sa charge, il surveillait lui-même nos domestiques, et nous lui devons une éternelle reconnaissance pour avoir fait défricher la métairie de St. Joseph sur les plaines (d'Abraham). Sa générosité était parfaite.

set in, before the interior of the monastery was sufficiently advanced to set at liberty the inmates of "Bethlehem's cave" pent up as they were, and stifling in smoke and unwholesome air.

The winter was indeed long and painful for many reasons. The beloved Mother St. Joseph, who for the last four years had been sinking in a declared consumption, had not yet given up teaching her dear Hurons. All summer she had kept her place in the bark lodge, where Mother Mary accompanied her<sup>1</sup>, while she continued to explain the way to serve

En nous quittant, il nous légua un arpent de terre tout auprès de notre monastère sur lequel nous avons logé nos domestiques et concédé plusieurs emplacements. . . . . This holy priest fell a victim to the cruelty of the Iroquois in 1661.

<sup>1</sup> It was on occasions like these that our Mother used to write : "O ma chère sœur ! quel plaisir de se voir avec une grande troupe de femmes et de filles sauvages dont les pauvres habits qui ne sont que de peau ou quelque vieille couverture, n'ont pas si bonne odeur que ceux des Dames de France ! Mais la can-

God, to her attentive listeners, men and women, to the number of forty or fifty. Poor Indians ! how they listened with open, wondering eyes, marking their assent, and their admiration of the celestial doctrines that fell from her lips, by expressive gestures ! But even the supernatural energy of a soul all on fire with holy zeal, could no longer support the wasted frame, nor hush the stifling cough.

Mother St. Joseph, extended upon her humble couch, from which she was never more to rise, lingered from the 2d of February to the 4th of April.

The picture of that sick-room is too sad to retrace, were it not all radiant with the glow of celestial visitors,—Angels of peace and consolation, flitting around the death-bed of a saint ! That sick-room was the

leur et simplicité de leur esprit est si ravissante qu'elle ne se peut dire. Celle des hommes n'est pas moindre. Je vois des Capitaines généreux et vaillants se mettre à genoux à mes pieds me priant de les faire prier Dieu, " etc.

common dormitory ; that dying-couch, one of those beds arranged one under another which, even a person in health, would not willingly accept.

Let Mother Mary of the Incarnation tell the rest :

“ The Altar where the Divine Sacrifice was offered, being in the adjoining apartment, the dear sufferer could hear mass from her bed, and listen to the occasional exhortations ;—which was a great comfort to her. On the other hand, she could see all who went to the Chapel, as they must pass before her bed ; she could hear the singing, the clang of the bell, the clatter of wooden shoes, the noise of the school-room, the din of the kitchen, which was in the room below, and separated from hers by a simple flooring. The odor of eels infected the whole house ; the smoke forced us to open the windows, even in the coldest weather ;—all this incommoded her and augmented her cough, yet, far from uttering the least complaint, she

would fain persuade us that it amused her."

She congratulated herself upon the privations she endured: "O how happy I am, she would say, to die in this poor place, deprived of the comforts and delicacies I would have enjoyed in France! Tell our good Mothers of Tours, tell my dear parents, that I die happy in the sacrifice I have made. Tell them I have never regretted coming to Canada. God has given me the promised hundred-fold in this life, and I now look forward with confidence to the crown of eternal life in the next, according to His word."

After this dying message to her dear parents, and Mothers in France, she had many things to say yet to her beloved Sisters around her.—They must not fatigue themselves at the burial, nor attempt to follow to the letter the Cere-  
monial, but let the workmen bear the body to the place of interment. She has a word of encouragement for each and a

smile that told of the utter peace of her soul.

The sacred Viaticum was brought to the dying Spouse of Christ; the consoling sacrament of Extreme Unction administered.—The last three days of her holy life, were such a foretaste of heavenly bliss as effaced all impression of physical sufferings; and the separation of soul and body was gentle as the parting of the sunset glow from the summer cloud.

The funeral ceremonies were performed in the new Monastery, and were attended by a great concourse, both of French and Indians. Mother St. Joseph was universally esteemed, and universally regretted. The Governor, who was present at her funeral, had caused himself to be recommended to her prayers, with all the Colony. The Hurons may be said to have been the chief mourners;—for them she had been a benefactress, a mother, their “Sainte Fille”;—her loss left them inconsolable.



Faithful to the pious lessons she had taught them, although the tidings of her death had filled their hamlet with lamentations, they did not fail on the following morning to have the Requiem service performed for her, on their Island, (Isle of Orleans) before they came to assist at her burial.

Before retiring from that lowly tomb in the garden of the Monastery, which is still regarded as consecrated ground, although the mortal remains of beloved Mother St. Joseph no longer repose there, let us trace her monumental inscription.

Three words will suffice : INNOCENCE,  
— FIDELITY TO GRACE, — UNBOUNDED  
CHARITY.

Her ancestors, the feudal lords of St. Germain and Savonnières, had never been more nobly represented than in her father, M. de la Troche ; her mother Jeanne Raoul was of the highest nobility : yet it may safely be asserted that in

herself culminated the glory of an illustrious family. The sweet odor of piety breathes from her very cradle, and her first tottering footsteps bear her on errands of charity. Idolized by her parents, and returning their love with all the tenderness of her youthful heart, Marie de la Troche, at the age of thirteen, already meditates the sacrifice of her immense wealth, her noble name, all the advantages the world offers her, in order to become the Spouse of Him, who, for her love, had given His life on Calvary. By her importunities, and by arguments above her years she triumphed over the opposition of her parents and obtained their consent to enter the Novitiate of the Ursulines at Tours, where she had been placed for her education.

The postulant of fourteen was a child in years only. In judgment, in capacity, in fidelity to the duties of the religious life, she was mature as a person of thirty. At sixteen, she pronounced her vows with

the fervor of one who fully appreciated the grace of her vocation.

Her fidelity in the discharge of her duties in the schools, her piety, her engaging modesty and unaffected gravity, rendered her the model of her companions and the delight of her superiors. Her zeal for the salvation of souls, which had manifested itself from her tender infancy, was an undying flame, enkindled in her soul in order to consume every other affection. This zeal was the principle of her vocation for Canada, and of the courage which sustained her in the midst of such labors and hardships as attended her here.

Her first apostolate for the conversion of the poor Indians, was that of prayer;—uniting herself in spirit with the missionaries, and offering her labors and sufferings to God in their behalf. Her desire to devote herself to their instruction, she had regarded as chimerical, until the moment when the way was

opened so providentially. Her demand to be allowed to accompany Mother Mary of the Incarnation, was met by an intimation to be in readiness to take the office of another Sister who would be appointed to go.

But neither the opposition of her Community, unwilling for many reasons to part with her, nor the justly expected refusal of her parents to consent to her going, disturbed the equanimity of her generous soul. Confiding in the protection of St. Joseph, she awaited the result of the deliberations of the various parties interested. That result, as we know already, was most fortunate for the foundation of the Ursulines of Quebec.

The name of Mother St. Joseph is next to that of Mother Mary of the Incarnation in their hearts. They can never forget that the first of her three constant demands to Heaven, was,—the sanctification of her Community. The second was,

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the conversion of all the pagan nations of America; the third,—the preservation and prosperity of the French Colony in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Relation of 1652 inserted a Biographical notice of Mother St. Joseph, which occupies nearly twenty pages.

“ Ces mémoires [L'abregé de la Vie de la Mère M. de St. Joseph] étant entre nos mains—says the author of the *Relation*—j'ai cru que ce serait faire tort au public de renfermer ce trésor dans les seules maisons des Ursulines. . . . Son convoi ne se fit pas avec les pompes de l'Europe, mais avec tout ce qu'il y avait d'honorable au pays, avec toutes les affections et tous les regrets des Français et des sauvages qui l'aimaient et qui la chérissaient pendant sa vie et qui la respectent comme une sainte après sa mort.”  
*Rev. P. Ragueneau. Sup. des Jes.*

## CHAPTER XI.

**1652-1665.**

### THE SECOND MONASTERY.

The central building of that pile which constitutes, at the present day, the Ursuline Monastery, is the one that was erected in 1652, by Mother Mary of the Incarnation. Those walls, cimented by charity, it would seem, over which our Mother passed so many times, conversing in the intimate recesses of her soul, with the Blessed Virgin, as with the principal Directress of the enterprise, were not dissolved by the flames which for the second time, some thirty years later, consumed the Monastery.

After a fifteen months' residence in the house of Madame de la Peltrie, the Ursulines were enabled to remove to their new Convent. Mother Mary, with that

forethought which marked all her plans, had provided additional class-rooms by extending the walls to the length of one hundred and eight feet, instead of ninety-two.

The nuns effected their removal on the vigil of Pentecost. It is easy to imagine that few *baggage-wagons* were required. As usual, the whole population of Quebec took part in the rejoicings. On the morning of Pentecost Sunday, a procession from the parish Church,—priests in glittering cape and stole, youths in the white robe of the *alcolyte*, citizens in holiday attire, came singing hymns befitting the occasion, to transport the Blessed Sacrament from the lowly Altar where it had rested for the last fifteen months, to the Tabernacle prepared in the new Convent for its reception. During three days, the clergy and people came in similar order to sing High Mass in the new Chapel, where there was exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for the *quarant' Ore*. To all the country, the rebuilding

of the Monastery and the opening of the schools on a larger scale, was a subject of joy and congratulation; while men of business, aware of the difficulties and cost of such a work, wondered to see it accomplished in so short a period.

Once more Mother Mary and her companions were at liberty to give full scope to their zeal. The bark cabin might be torn down, the shade of the grand *Ash-tree*, destined to perpetuate the souvenir of the holy teachings in the open air, might—unless from choice—be abandoned; at all hours, a more secure shelter would protect them, while they mingle with the lore of books,

“The higher lore that sanctifies.”

The seminarists continued to occupy the late residence of the Community, the house of Madame de la Peltrie.

The French population was not yet numerous, but there was a rising generation as the Relations testify (1653) of “fine, healthy children.”



This explains what Mother Mary states of the Institution at this period. "After the restoration of our Monastery" she writes, "our scholars augmented in proportion to our accomodations. In fact, we have been, at times, overcharged; and I have seen myself, to my great regret, forced to refuse many;—the poor parents, retiring with tears in their eyes, while I wept in my heart. It is indeed a miracle that we have been able to subsist," overwhelmed as they were with the occupations of our Institute.

When we reflect how well the good Mother understood the art of lodging a large family within very narrow limits, without complaint or observation, we may easily form some estimate of the number of pupils. The zeal of the colonists for the education of their children need not be frustrated by the scarcity of money. The usual barter of the country will do, for the nuns required "*fire-wood, butter, pork, salted-eels, corn, vegetables, &c.*" although they cultivate as much land as

they can under the charitable direction of their Chaplain.

From the Journal of the Jesuits, already cited, we learn that in 1660, forty children made their first Communion at the Parish: twenty had been placed at the Convent by the Bishop, for the usual preliminary instructions. From this number of *poor* children within the limits of the city, nearly of the same age, it is reasonable to infer that the French pupils under the care of the Ursulines at this period were numerous:—the usual proportion of children for their first Communion is not one fourth of those sent to school.

The education of those times, without embracing the diversified programme required by the customs of the present day, was perhaps the more favorable to the development of the superior faculties of the mind. The rules for the Institute which were printed at that date and followed, required the pupils to be taught reading and grammar; the Christian doc-

trine and sacred History ; practical arithmetic, penmanship and needlework.

The requirements of modern systems of education were unknown in the 17th century, nor were they yet fashionable in Louis XIV or Queen Anne's time.

In preparation for the Huron seminarists, Mother Mary of Incarnation had commenced the study of their language two years before Mother St. Joseph's death.

Their classes, therefore, did not suffer, and we hear of "good seminarists" who are "pious and devout," who are so "well advanced that they are able to aid in the classes, teaching their companions to read and to write: able also, to make their clothes and keep the house in order." Finally, we hear of several "who pressed to be received into the Novitiate; but as the nuns always put them off, they discovered, at last, themselves that they could not always remain in the same place; they longed for the woods, yet left the

Convent with regret." <sup>1</sup> "We have not *sense* enough, they said, to live like you;" they might have said, God has given us hearts to love Him, but not lungs to breathe the air of cities. Like those wild and yet beautiful flowers, the Orchis tribe, that thrive in the clefts of rocks, at the base of the overhanging precipice, in the solitude of the forest glade,—but fade and die when transplanted to the garden and treated to a rich soil: so our native American tribes faded and were short-lived, in proportion as they were deprived of the air and life of the great forests, which for so many ages had been their home.

Besides the direct object of instruction, the Monastery was the ordinary refuge

<sup>1</sup> Letters of Mother Mary of the Incarnation, and Relations 1653, 4, 1655-1658.

The Hospital nuns received one into their novitiate, but she only lived to receive the habit and to pronounce her vows on her death-bed. A few others have been received into the different Communities of Canada—but all died young.

for the Indian girls, whenever their parents were unable to protect them.

Sometimes it was an orphan, that the relatives could not provide for;—sometimes a wee babe of some months, which the nuns were offered because the mother was dead, or that two of the same age were burdensome.<sup>1</sup> More than once, a poor widow, with tearful eyes, begged for the protecting shelter of the Convent,—and was not refused. Mother Mary

<sup>1</sup> Ces bonnes Mères sont extrêmement charitables; les difficultés du pays ne les étonnent point; leur séminaire ne refuse aucune Française ni aucune fille Sauvage; l'aumône se fait chez elle en tout temps, leur cœur est plus grand que leurs biens. Les pensionnaires en France ne grèvent point les Monastères où elles sont instruites; ce n'est pas de même en Canada: il faut non-seulement nourrir et instruire les petites séminaristes, mais il les faut habiller, et à leur départ leur faire de bonnes aumônes et souvent encore à leurs parents, tant ils sont pauvres. "After giving some instances the good Father adds: "Vous diriez qu'elles feraient volontiers tous les frais nécessaires pour les mener et pour les conduire jusqu'en paradis. *Relation.*

seems to have had a special compassion, and a special care for widows and orphans.

It was with the latter she was most successful in forming them to all the usages of civilized life,—some of these seminarists really intelligent and accomplished became the wives of respectable Frenchmen. Mr. Boucher, afterwards Governor of Three Rivers, married a seminarist.

In 1659, the nuns abandoned, for two years, their class-rooms in the house of Madame de la Peltrie in favor of an illustrious personage, for whom, it appears, Quebec could offer no better accommodations. It was the noble Scion of the house of Montmorency, Jean-François Laval, the first Bishop of Canada. Mother Mary announcing his arrival says:—"He is a man of superior merit and singular virtue, whose abilities are of the highest order. He is above all human respect, zealous for the spread of religion and for every good work. His manner of life is so exemplary that every one is in admira-

tion: in short, he is a man chosen by Heaven, an apostle worthy of all possible consideration. We shall be incommoded, certainly, to find place in our classrooms for our seminarists, but we shall suffer the inconvenience joyfully on such an occasion. He will have the enjoyment of a fine garden; we have put up a cloister-paling, that all may be according to rule."

Within the precincts of the cloister, another enterprise had been undertaken, which doubtless received a fresh impulse from the presence of the chief Pastor. It was a Church, adjoining the Convent, commenced by the unwearied friend of the Ursulines, Madame de la Peltrie.

The pious widow, who without the consolation of an irrevocable engagement in the service of her Divine Master, persevered in the humble and retired life she had embraced in the Community, had long nourished the project of raising a "House to the Lord"—thus she designated the church she had in contemplation.

While the nuns were engaged in rebuilding the Monastery, she had commenced amassing the necessary funds. Her annual income, much diminished by the law-proceedings of her relatives, only permitted her to begin in 1656. The Governor, M. de Lauson, invited to lay the foundation stone, had assisted at Vespers, with his suite, in the little Chapel of the Monastery, on the Feast of the Ascension. The Office of the Church concluded, the Superior of the Jesuits, and other Ecclesiastics, proceeded to the spot marked for the foundation. The stone, inscribed with the sacred names,—Jesus, Mary, Joseph,—was blessed by the Rev. Father LeMercier; the Governor, with his silver trowel, performed the part assigned him in the ceremony, while all the cloistered family looked on with pleasing anticipations.

Two years and a half later <sup>1</sup> the chapel being completed, was solemnly blessed

<sup>1</sup> This date we have been enabled to verify by the *Journal des Jésuites* :—1659.



by the Superior of the Jesuits ; the Blessed Sacrament was transported to the new altar, leaving the apartments which had hitherto served for prayer and the Divine Sacrifice, free to be employed as classrooms or for other purposes.

At the close of this period of thirteen years (1665) we find the Ursulines had augmented their number of teachers in the Institute by receiving several subjects, formed in their classes<sup>1</sup>. Although the Indian race had greatly diminished throughout all the country, since the first arrival of the nuns,—cut off by sickness<sup>2</sup> and the unsparing arms of the Iroquois,—there were still the sedentary Indians of

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XII.

<sup>2</sup> "Sickness,"—among the Indians.—For Europeans the country was remarkably healthy. During thirty two years, only two deaths had occurred in the Community. The Superior of the Jesuits says : *L'air du Canada est si excellent, qu'il y a fort peu de malades en ce pays, et on n'y peut quasi mourir, à moins qu'on ne meure d'accident ou de mort violente. Rel. 1663.*

Sillery, whose daughters, from the first, were instructed in the Convent; there were also the Hurons, who, since they had been transported from the Island of Orleans to Quebec (1658), and lodged near the *Château St. Louis*, sent their children daily for instruction, to the number of sixty or eighty. These, as in former times, had their daily mess of *sagamité*, after their school was over.

During the winter of 1662, Mother Mary was surrounded by a class of novices, eager to render themselves useful, and to avail themselves of her knowledge of the Indian languages. For their benefit, and for the use of the other nuns, she composed at that time, a catechism in Huron; three in Algonquin, and a large Dictionary, French and Algonquin. With all this labor for the Indian race, writing in 1664, she says: "We are still more occupied in the classes for the French children; and, it is certain that if God had not sent the Ursulines to Canada, they would be left to the most deplorable ignorance. All

the young girls in the country pass through our hands; and this causes piety and religion to flourish everywhere. The French population, rapidly increasing, our employments must keep pace with that increase."

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## CHAPTER XII.

**1652-1665.**

## THE NOVITIATE.

The secret of a religious vocation is, for many, a mystery unfathomable: but in vain would they seek, in the circle of human passions, the motive for embracing a state, whose first obligation is to curb those passions. By what standard can the wordly-minded, the unbelieving, judge of actions that arise from motives superior to nature? No; they are incapable of forming a just estimate in these matters; and

from false premises, necessarily draw false conclusions. They study the phenomenon from their own level, and setting up a caricature, call it a true portrait. Ambition, pride, self-love, at best religious enthusiasm—they cannot mount to higher motives. But neither pride nor ambition prompts one to reduce himself to be the servant of the poor, the orphan, or the savage. Self-love is not so blind as to thrust itself into the wilderness, to seek admirers, nor courageous enough to endure long years of abnegation and utter self-sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> As to religious enthusiasm it may excite to rash enterprises, but it is insufficient to ensure perseverance;—the fire invariably burns out, and leaves its possessor colder and weaker than before.

<sup>1</sup> The present century will have to record other heroic examples of self-sacrifice; and none more resembling that of the first Ursulines and Hospital nuns of Canada than the recent establishment for the poor savages of the River McKenzie, by the courageous Sr. Lapointe and her little Community the daughters of Madame Youville.

The true motive of a religious vocation, especially for the active Orders, is CHARITY,—that supreme love of God which hears with joy the injunction: "Take up thy Cross and follow me;"—believing in the promised "hundred-fold in this world, and eternal life in the next";—believing also the words of our Saviour: "Whatsoever ye have done to the least of these, ye have done unto me."

Without this supernatural motive, in a greater or less degree, there can be no true religious vocation.

But it is time to return from this digression.

The value of the labors of our first Ursulines to society, is sufficiently evident;—but how will their work be perpetuated? Will the wild soil of Canada be found productive of plants, fit to be transferred to the "Garden enclosed" of the Celestial Bridegroom? Yet, why should we not expect to find the Lily and the Rose blossoming under the shadow of the Cross? In an atmosphere, redolent of the

purest Christianity, there could not be a dearth of vocations for the cloister.

We have seen that three novices had been received before the burning of the Convent;—Miss Barré, and Miss de Boulogne, were natives of France: Catherine Lezeau, a lay sister, was the first Canadian novice.

In 1652, Miss Genevieve Bourdon, at the age of fourteen, hears the mysterious call, and turning away from the world she was just entering, she begs to be permitted to embrace the religious state. The Honorable *Procureur-Général*, her father, was of that class of men, whose worth is superior to any station. The refuge of the poor, the protector of the widow and the orphan, he was a man of prayer, leading an interior life, such as is the aim of the monk in his cell, or the nun in her cloister. Such a man would not refuse to part with his daughter, when it was to give her to God <sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Marguerite Bourdon, the eldest of the family, and her younger sister Mary, embraced also the re-

Genevieve, on taking the veil, <sup>1</sup> adopts the name of St. Joseph, proposing, no

religious state, among the nuns of the Hospital in Quebec.

<sup>1</sup> Le 9 décembre 1652, Geneviève Bourdon prend l'habit aux Ursulines; c'est moi (*le Père Rague-  
neau* Sup.) qui officia le P. Jérôme Lalement qui  
dit la messe, et le Père Châtelain qui prêcha. Ma-  
dame d'Ailleboust et Madame Bourdon entrèrent et  
dînèrent dans la maison des Ursulines. M. le Gou-  
verneur, M. d'Ailleboust et M. Bourdon vinrent dîner  
en notre réfectoire comme aussi M. de St. Sauveur  
et M. Vignal, (*l'un prêtre, l'autre chapelain des  
Ursulines.*) M. Bourdon ayant envoyé de quoi di-  
ner pour tout notre réfectoire, *ubi duplicia fuere  
omnia.* Jour. des Jés.

The *Journal des Jésuites*, published under the supervision of the Reverend Laverdière and Casgrain has furnished details particularly precious for the history of the Monastery, verifying the words of their Preface: "Ces détails, peu important alors, sont aujourd'hui d'un grand intérêt, à cause de la lumière qu'ils peuvent jeter sur ces époques reculées."

Rev. C. Laverdière, Librarian of the University Laval, has written a valuable "Histoire du Canada." To his care was also confided the publication of the complete series of the *Relation des Jésuites*, ordered by the Canadian government.

doubt, while placing herself under the protection of that glorious Saint, to imitate the holy nun who had lately borne it with so much edification to the Community.

A younger sister, Miss Anne Bourdon, having, in 1658, attained the age of fourteen, like Geneviève, enters the novitiate of the Ursulines. Hereafter, she is known as Mother Anne of St. Agnes.

These two angelic young girls have not become nuns "to pine away and die." O no! Mother St. Joseph lives to celebrate the 47th anniversary of her profession, having filled all the offices of the Community, except that of Superioress. She was oftenest employed at class, where her vigilance, her zeal, her tender piety, rendered her services invaluable.

Mother Anne of St. Agnes was very precious to her community, which she was called to govern, later, after those venerable Mothers who had directed her in the paths of perfection, had been called to their reward.



This is not the place to enter into further details of the piety, the rare intelligence, the rich endowments, of this first Canadian Superioress, whose memory is embalmed in the gratitude of the Community. She lived to the age of seventy.

Miss Anne Bourdon had taken the veil with Miss Mary Boutet de St. Martin, in religion Mother St. Augustin, who pronounced her vows at seventeen, and lived to renew the 40th anniversary of her profession. Mother Mary of St. Augustin, was chiefly employed at the Institute, for which her talents adapted her in a special manner. Proposing to herself our Saviour in His hidden life, as her model, she had a special preference for all the laborious and obscure offices,—aiding the lay Sisters, sweeping, taking care of the little Indian girls.

The following year, the novitiate received another acquisition in the person of Miss Jeanne Godefroy, who had been a pupil in the Convent from the age of six years. She was one of those who,

driven from their beds at a moment's warning, were there shivering on the snow, while the fire was consuming the Monastery. Her father, M. John Godefroy, of Linctot in Normandy, was one of the earliest settlers of Three Rivers. To realize the perils that surrounded these pioneers of the colonization of Canada, we have only to read the tragic fate of six members of our novice's family. In the daily encounters with the Iroquois, determined on the extermination of the settlers, five among her ten brothers, were killed. Her uncle, Thomas Godefroy, was taken prisoner, and burned by those barbarians.

A man capable of maintaining his post, and aiding, in such circumstances, to fix the French name upon the soil, might well be remembered by the "Grand Roy" in his distribution of titles<sup>1</sup> of nobility among the most worthy of his Canadian subjects.

<sup>1</sup> These titles came to the family Godefroy in 1688.

Returning to our Novice, who took the name of St. Frs. Xavier, we must cite here, affording, in its way, a picture of the times, a few lines of the "Memoir" of this amiable Canadian Ursuline : " Our little pupil, from the age of six years, was remarkable for the precocity of her intelligence, her happy memory, her brilliant talents. She made rapid progress in learning her catechism, Sacred History, and the other studies suited to her age. In these early times, the Rev. Fathers of the Society of Jesus, used to give public instructions on Sundays, at which all our boarders assisted. To excite emulation among them, they were allowed to learn dialogues or verses on sacred subjects. Miss Godefroy was the one who oftenest carried off the prize for application and success. "

Bishop Laval gave her the veil at the age of sixteen. From that day forward, she never turned aside from the paths of perfection she had resolved to pursue.

Mother St. Frs. Xavier was one of those

young sisters, so ardent to learn the Indian languages, as we have seen in 1662. Her biographical notice would lead us too far, while it would show us this fervent Ursuline, practising the sweet virtues of charity and humility, preserving the candor and gaiety of her childhood, passing through the laborious offices of Depositary, Mistress of Novices, and General Mistress of the Boarding School.

Another youthful aspirant to the religious life from Three Rivers, enters in 1665. It is Angelique Poisson, daughter of the Seigneur of Gentilly. Her vocation was as precocious as that of the Misses Bourdon; and her *eloquence* like theirs, in pleading the cause of her fervor, enabled her to triumph over the opposition of her mother, her only surviving parent. She entered the Novitiate in her fifteenth year, to serve the Community, and edify it to the age of seventy-nine. The annalist of the Convent, tracing a notice of this beloved Mother Angelique Poisson of St. John the Evangelist, who died in the

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office of Superioress, makes us share her admiration of a life so pure, so fervent, so replete with edification during the space of sixty-four years, which she had passed in the faithful observance of the rule and the obligations of the religious state.

These are the five first-fruits of the grace of a religious vocation for the Ursulines in the New World. Won by the sweet attractions of grace, they turned away from home and kindred, to follow God more closely, living in Him by a life of prayer and recollection ; laboring for Him in purity of intention, in singleness of heart. Their death was in peace, and their memory is blessed : who shall say that their sacrifice was in vain, or their choice unwise ?

CHAPTER XIII.

1655-1666.

THE URSULINES AND THE IROQUOIS.

1668.

CIVILIZATION OF THE INDIANS.

Would the Iroquois ambassadors, at Quebec, in 1655 and '56, fail to visit the House of Jesus, and the *Holy Virgins*, so much talked of by their Huron captives? And would the Ursulines, with their experience of the value of such interviews, fail to seize the occasion to speak of the "Great Creator of all things" to their swarthy visitors?

Mother Mary tells us how the Chief Teharihogen and all his company, eighteen stalwart braves, were received at the Convent, and twice regaled splendidly.

The seminarists were a wonder to them, especially to see them cared for and cherished so tenderly by the nuns, to whom they were by nature, strangers.

Marie Arinadsit, who, at the age of eleven, writes French as well at Huron, and sings hymns in three languages, is a prodigy for them, especially after she has taught a class of Huron girls in their presence. Marie profits of the occasion to harangue the Chief; she makes him the present of a wampum belt, to invite him to send the little Iroquois girls to the Convent, and promises to treat them as her sisters.

Another day, a female sachem comes, with all her suite. Marie recommences, with the same success. Mother Mary of the Incarnation has repeated interviews with Magdalen and her companions. Before they leave Quebec, their faith is firm, and they are sufficiently instructed to be baptized: the ceremony takes place in the convent Chapel,—“Oh! what a glad Te Deum was sung on that occasion.

Thankful hearts exulted, to see the persecutors of Christianity become the children of God." The ambassadors and the new Christians, on their way home, meet a large number of their nation, men and women, at Montreal, and tell them so much of the nuns and their "seminarists" that another band come on, impelled by no other motive but to see the "sights" at Quebec. They were welcome at the Convent no doubt. The women were admitted to the class-rooms of the seminarists, to be regaled and entertained like the former visitors.

The nuns were delighted with the females of that nation, whose warriors were a terror to the country. Mother Mary pronounces them the gentlest creatures in the world, and often reiterates the wish to see a troop of young Iroquois girls in her convent. This wish was destined to be fulfilled, as we shall see later. The noble Magdalen, who has come so far to be instructed and baptized, might herself be considered as the first seminarist.



This fervent Christian, returning to her country with Mother Mary's holy words still ringing in her heart, proved faithful to the graces she had received. To aid the missionary, Father Dablon, in acquiring the language, she remains hours by his side, a willing and patient teacher. She is a missionary herself. Fearless of the ridicule and contempt to which she was exposed by fulfilling an office considered unworthy of her rank, she goes daily from cabin to cabin to call the Christians to prayer. She sings at mass with the Huron captives, and in all things lives up to the teachings of her Faith. When Father Chaumonot writes, she renders Mother Mary of the Incarnation an account of herself, declares she will ever be faithful to prayer, and renews her promise to send her sister to the Convent. Later, when persecuted by her unbelieving relations, she never wavered in her faith, and her death was as consoling as her life had been edifying.

It was not without a smile we read in

the Old Books that the nuns took part also in the Council <sup>1</sup> of the Iroquois and the Missionaries spoke for them; a present in the style of the country, <sup>2</sup> inviting the Indian braves to send their daughters to the Convent.

But the pagan Iroquois was the personification of deceit and treachery. Five years after <sup>3</sup> the visit of the ambassadors, alluded to above, the Iroquois were again expected at the Convent,—but not as

<sup>1</sup> This assembly was held in the midst of the Iroquois country, where the missionaries had fearlessly penetrated.

<sup>2</sup> Pour donner du relief à tout cela [les présents des Pères] suivait le présent des Mères Ursulines de Québec, qui s'offraient de grand cœur à recevoir chez elles les petites filles du pays, pour les élever dans la piété et dans la crainte de Dieu. *Relation*, 1656.

<sup>3</sup> This interval of five years was one of alternate hope and anxiety, throughout the Colony; the Iroquois, having dispersed the Neutral nation and destroyed the Eries, were waging war with the Andaste, and still pursuing under treacherous pretenses of friendship, the Algonquins and the remnant of the Hurons. The reader will not expect to find here the

welcome visitors. The Monastery had become a Fortress, not merely by a figure of speech in the Indian style, but in reality.

This episode must not be omitted : it belongs to the year 1660. No one had forgotten the hostile flotilla which had passed under the very cannons of the Fort, (1656) to fall upon the Hurons on the Island of Orleans, killing some, and bearing off nearly a hundred into captivity. This daring act was achieved by the Mohawks, the most intractable of all the Iroquois tribes.

In 1660, large bodies of these fierce marauders were threatening the French settlements. Hamlets were pillaged and burned, whole families were cut off. A prisoner, taken by the French, revealed

details—which are the province of the History of Canada.

We cannot forbear mentioning here—on the part of the Community—Dr. Myles' Series of Histories of Canada, which are written in a spirit of impartiality deserving of the highest praise,—to say nothing of the ease and perspicuity of the style.

the plots of his contrymen, declaring that an army of eight hundred, or more, were pressing on, to surprise Quebec. "Let us cut off the head," said they, "then we shall have easy work of the members. Let us strike Onontio." The enemy was not farther off than Three Rivers. No time was to be lost. The danger from these barbarians was thought to be so imminent that the Bishop came for the Ursulines, and conducted them with their pupils to the Jesuits' buildings which had been prepared as a fortress. The Hospital nuns were provided for with the same solicitude. Mother Mary of the Incarnation, always intrepid in the hour of danger, remained, with three of her nuns, not to leave the house at the mercy of the soldiers. The next morning, at six o'clock, the nuns returned to their respective Convents, which the soldiers guarded, and which were rapidly transformed into fortresses. The windows were walled up to the middle, and provided with beams and loop-holes. Redoubts were erected

in various directions; the only egress left free, was a postern-gate with its moulinet.

Add to this, two *corps-de-gardes*, regularly mounted by a guard of twenty-four resolute men, to whom were associated, at night, for the out-posts, twelve French blood-hounds,—and we shall have some idea of the martial air of the Monastery during eight days of that month of June. The fortifications were maintained during five months, but the inmates of the Monastery were not disturbed.

Once there was a sudden alert;—the Iroquois were certainly in sight. In less than half an hour, every thing was in readiness to give him a terrible reception. Mother Mary and her aids, had distributed the ammunition; every soldier was at his post. Happily it was a false alarm, no enemy appeared. Later, it was known that the colony had been saved by the heroic devotion of Dollard and his seventeen companions, with a party of Hurons from Quebec, who within their little fort,

had so weakened an army of seven hundred Iroquois that they came no farther.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We give the picture in the original;—"L'armée des Iroquois étaient attendue ... Nous n'en avons eu que la peur, si cela peut s'appeler peur, car je n'ai pas vu qu'aucune de nous ait été hors sa tranquillité. Le bruit même de la garde ne nous donnait aucune distraction. Nos gens n'entraient dans la clôture que le soir; on laissait le passage en bas et les offices ouverts pour faire la ronde et la visite. Toutes les avenues des cours étaient barricadées, outre environ une douzaine de grands chiens qui gardaient les portes de dehors, et dont la garde valait mieux sans comparaison que celle des hommes pour écarter les sauvages; car ils craignent autant les chiens français que les hommes, parce qu'ils se jettent sur eux et les déchirent quand ils peuvent les attraper."

"On se tient certain que les Iroquois reviendront à l'automne; c'est pourquoi on se fortifie dans Québec. Monsieur le Gouverneur travaille à faire faire des villages fermés où il oblige chacun de bâtir une maison pour sa famille, et contribuer à faire des granges communes pour assurer les moissons .... De la sorte il se trouvera neuf ou dix réduits bien peuplés et capables de se défendre. Ce qui est à craindre c'est la famine, car si l'ennemi vient à l'automne il ravagera les moissons; s'il vient au printemps, il empêchera les semences."

*De Québec, le 25 juin 1660.*

Our cloistered *Letter-writer* shews us the state of the Colony in the fall,—Nov. 2nd 1660. Her appreciations are, as usual, just, and her resolutions full of intrepidity. She writes :—

“Rev. F. Lejeune has gone to France to demand succor : it is to be hoped his Majesty will not refuse it. If these barbarians are not humbled, they will destroy the Colony. There is no assurance in their treaties of peace, which they only make in order to gain time.....Our Frenchmen and Christian Indians, taken prisoners last spring, have been put to death with horrible torments ; after having their limbs mutilated, their flesh cut to pieces, they were burnt in a slow fire. The last one who was tormented thus, threw himself on his knees each time that a joint of his fingers was cut off, to thank God and bless him for his sufferings”....

“While the country is in this deplorable state, perhaps our Mothers will be anxious about us, and wish to have us return to France..Should this be the case, do your

best, my dear son, to prevent it. We are not afraid..... Although the intention of our enemies is to destroy us, I have a firm confidence that the design of God is to ensure the stability of the Colony and to render this new Church victorious over her enemies.—Adieu for this year.”

[The interest the Ursulines took in all that regarded the conversion of the Indians, and the welfare of the Colony, with which their own was inseparably linked, induces us to follow briefly the course of events until, at last, the tomahawk of the Iroquois is buried, and the Lily of France is suffered to grow a while in peace.]

The issue of these events of 1660, was the return of that intrepid missionary, Father Le Moyne to the Iroquois, as a hostage. Already he had four times penetrated into their country, at the imminent risk of his life. His chief consolations were among the Huron women, captives, whose faith he found undimmed ; some even had won their mistresses and brought them to receive instruction.

Strange as it may seem, Christianity was taking root in the cantons of the Iroquois, while parties of their braves were, as usual, threading the by-



paths of the forests, particularly in the vicinity of Montreal and Three Rivers, to burst upon the unguarded and the defenceless.

The Cayuga chief even made a present, soliciting Bishop Laval to send to his people, not only missionaries but nuns!—The French knew, by this time, the value of the treaties of peace and all the fair promises of the Mohawks. There remained one resource—to subdue them by force of arms,—but for that the colonists were unprepared.

Men of influence had been sent to engage the French monarch to furnish troops for an expedition, in form, against them. These came at last, in 1665. The Marquis of Tracy, named Vice-Roy and entrusted with almost royal prerogatives, commanded about 1200 men.

The season was too far advanced, before the last companies arrived, to permit the expedition to be undertaken with all the forces; but the Marquis sent a detachment to defend Three Rivers, and to establish forts that might protect the friendly Indians in their hunting grounds, and be a safeguard for Montreal and the other French settlements. The Governor DeCourcelles, impatient of delay, led, in the depth of winter, one hundred and fifty men to the country of the Iroquois.

Their march lay through a wilderness, to the distance of more than four hundred miles, over snows four feet in depth, through all the horrors of trackless wastes, impenetrable thickets, chill ravines, frozen heights,—with no conveyance but their own vigorous limbs, and no guide but a band of faithless Indians. When a three weeks' march, with all their baggage, and a bare escape of starvation, had led them into the heart of the wily enemy's country,<sup>1</sup> they were forced to retreat almost as suddenly as if they had met with a defeat, to save themselves from another enemy,—the return of spring, to break up the ice of the rivers which they had no means to ford. So much bravery was not totally lost ;—the Mohawks made overtures of peace ; but would they not prove as perfidious as heretofore ? A few months sufficed to show that this first expedition had not sufficiently terrified these human tigers. Again they had fallen upon a party of Frenchmen, killing some and bearing off others as prisoners.

The Marquis de Tracy, notwithstanding his advanced age, would command the expedition in person. The valiant army, more than thirteen thousand strong, equipped for war, prepared by the

<sup>1</sup> They were near the present city of Albany, N. Y.

reception of the Sacraments, and wearing, for the most part the scapular, which the nuns had wrought for them ;—embarked on the 14th September, in their long-boats, with all that military display, which inspires enthusiasm. Less hazardous than the winter expedition, this had yet its toils and its hardships, most trying to European soldiers.

The march extended to thirty days. At the aspect of this army, whose numbers seemed magnified to thousands, the Mohawk warriors fled in precipitation, so that the victory was won, like that of Jericho, without the shedding of blood ; and the pious Frenchmen sang, as usual, the Christian's triumphal Ode,—the *Te Deum*.

Very different were the Iroquois strongholds from what was expected of a savage foe. The " Long House " nation was lodged in cabins, thirty feet high, one hundred and twenty feet in length, by thirty in width. These structures, which sheltered eight or ten families, were provided interiorly, with elevated platforms for sleeping apartments, and furnished with implements of tillage and cooking. Abundant stores of provisions,—maize, beans, and fruit ; kettles, and other articles of European manufacture, together with arms and ammunitions, proved that there were

still life and strength in this universal foe, whose hand, like that of the son of Hagar, had been against every man's hand, for the last thirty years.

The forts of the Mohawks were triple palisades, twenty feet in height, flanked with bastions, and armed with cannons, purchased from the Dutch in New York.

All this, it seemed necessary to ruin. Fires were enkindled in each of the four strongholds, after rifling them of whatever could be of use to the French army. The terrible lesson proved salutary. Crippled of their strength, they were forced to keep the peace, and in a short time, Christianity, which was already flourishing in some of the cantons, entered that of the Mohawks.

The famous Garaconté,—not yet ranked as a catechumen,—was there, preparing the way for the missionaries.

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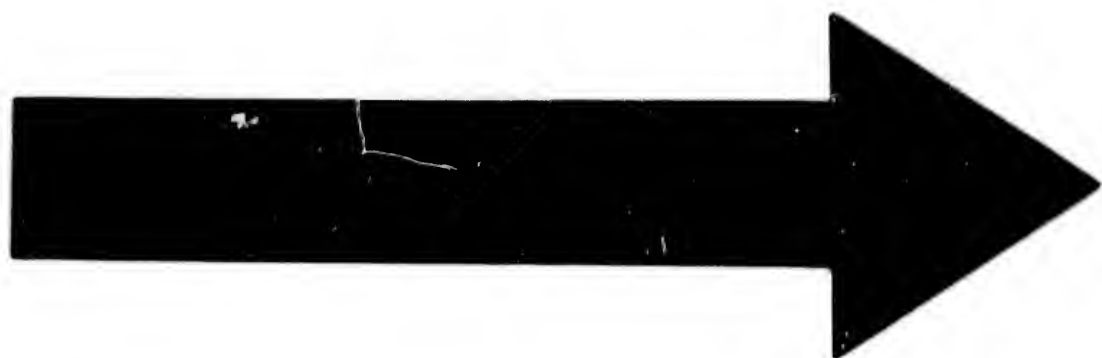
With the success of the French arms in 1666, commenced a period of greater prosperity for the Colony, which now seriously occupied the attention of the mother country. <sup>1</sup>

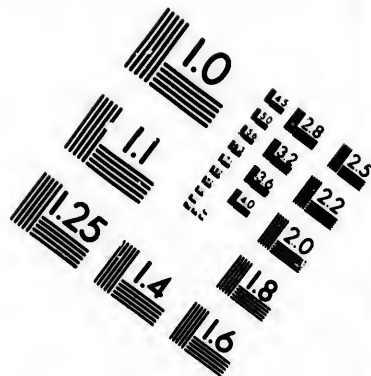
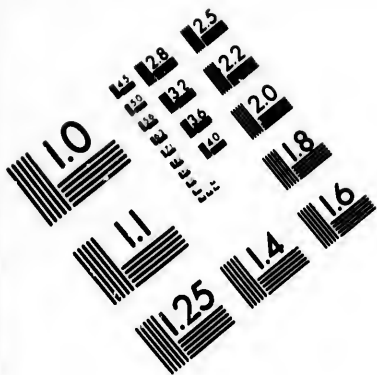
<sup>1</sup> The Relation of 1667, marks with admiration that Quebec had seen *eleven* vessels in her port that year.

It was an act of benevolence, no doubt, as well as of policy, in the French Monarch when, in 1668, he signified to his lieutenants in New France, that he desired the Indians should be civilized. It would be the means of assuring their welfare, while it would consolidate his power, forming of all those nations one vast empire.

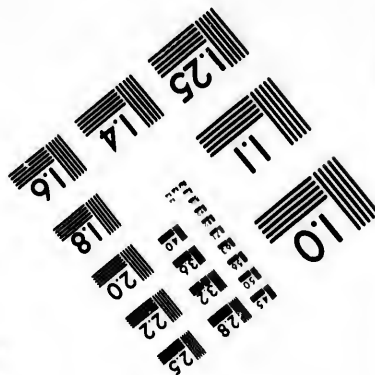
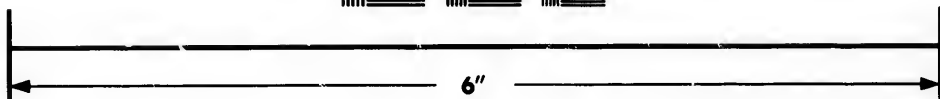
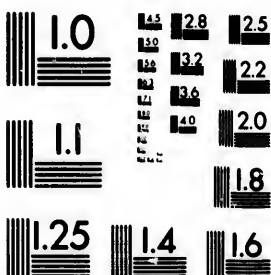
There was but one objection to be made; namely,—that the project was impracticable.

During half a century the missionaries had converted thousands to the Faith; they could say; “ Experience has proved that the Indians are as capable as the most civilized nation in Europe, of understanding and practising all that relates to piety and the service of God. They are perfectly instructed in the Christian doctrine, the mystery of the adorable Trinity, and the two natures in Jesus Christ; they know what the Church teaches regarding the immortality of the soul, the judgment of the world to come;





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mortal and venial sin, the fall of man, &c; They know the ordinary prayers of a Christian, the Commandments of God and the Church; they approach the Sacraments with piety and edification. Even children of the most tender age are susceptible of the impressions of faith." Thus writes the Rev. Father Fremin, in 1669, in reference to the most rebellious of all the tribes—the Mohawks. In all the preceding years, the Relations render similar testimonies with regard to the other Indians of North America.

"The Gospel knows no distinction of Greek or barbarian, bond or free." The converted Indian, retaining the rude blanket and moccasin, the wigwam for his home, and hunting for his profession, is no less the child of God and an heir of heaven, than the trader to whom he sells his furs, or the gentleman of rank and education who wears them.

Mother Mary of the Incarnation, like the missionaries, had already formed her

opinion, grounded on experience. <sup>1</sup> She pictures the liberty of the Indian mode of life, "which is so delightful to those who are accustomed to it, that it requires almost a miracle to detach them from it. The whole family go together to the chase. The men bring in the game, they put up their cabins as often as needed, make their snow-shoes, their canoes, their sledges, the cradle-beds of their infants—and smoke their calumets. The females know how to use the bow and arrow, how to direct a canoe as well as the men. They cut up the game, dress the skins, gather the wood, prepare the fire and

<sup>1</sup> A missionary who has spent twenty years with the Indians of Seaskatchewan (New Brit.) Rev. Father Lacombe O. M. J. writes, two centuries after Mother Mary.—"Nos sauvages de l'Amérique du Nord ne sont pas aptes à recevoir une complète civilisation, telle du moins que l'entendent ceux qui la leur offrent en dehors de la vraie religion.—Le sauvage est capable de connaître le vrai Dieu, les dogmes et la morale de la religion chrétienne. A vrai dire c'est bien la seule civilisation véritable. *Annales de la Prop. de la Foi* 1871.

the food. In summer they cultivate the ground for maize and other vegetables. The children, learning these things from their infancy, it becomes a second nature to them. It is far easier, says she, for a Frenchman to become a savage, than for a savage to adopt the customs of civilized nations."

But the project of civilizing the aborigines of America, their *Francisation*, as it was more definitely termed, having received the royal sanction, the experiment must be fairly tested. Bishop Laval had been too long in the country to have much confidence in its success, but in compliance with the royal will, he received six Huron boys into his Seminary, to be brought up with the French students; the Jesuit Fathers took others into their college. The Intendant Talon, placed five young Iroquois girls at the Convent for a similar purpose.

On this subject Mother Mary says: "If it be the will of our Sovereign, we shall undertake the task through obedience and

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for the glory of God. Nevertheless it is a very difficult thing if it is not an impossibility to civilize them, (*les franciser, ou les civiliser.*) We have more experience on this head than any one else, and we have made the remark that of the great number that have been instructed by us, we have hardly civilized one in a hundred. We have found them docile and intelligent, but they have not the constancy to remain with us after a certain time. They must see the woods;—they must follow their parents to the chase, and they find more pleasure in their wigwams than in our fine houses. That is the nature of the Indians: they cannot submit to constraint; if deprived of their usual liberty, they become melancholy; and sadness makes them sick. Besides, the Indians love their children to an excess, and if they see them sad, no consideration can induce them to leave them in that state. We have had them of different nations,—Hurons, Algonquins and Iroquois; these are the prettiest and the

most docile ; but are they more susceptible of being civilized ? Will they retain the polished manners, and the customs in which we are bringing them up ? I do not expect it, for they are of the Indian race, and that is sufficient."

This verdict of Rev. Mother Mary of the Incarnation has been sanctioned now by the experience of two hundred years. We all know that the Indians, as a race, have not entered into the category of what are called civilized nations. Those who live in the neighbourhood of the whites, enjoy more of the comforts of life ; but, unfortunately, they adopt the vices rather than the virtues of civilized man : in his vicinity, especially, they seem destined to an inevitable decrease in population, which has already ended, in many cases, in the extinction of a people. In Christianity, alone, the Indian has been found susceptible of "progress," capable of "improvement," and even attaining a high degree of moral excellence. Many among these simple-hearted people have exclaimed

like the saintly Catherine Tehgahkwita: "Who will teach me what is most agreeable to God that I may do it?" The results of the labors of the missionaries, as well as those of the nuns within the humble limits of their station, were great, certainly, since by imparting to these poor people the knowledge of the true God, and furnishing them the means of salvation, they opened heaven to many thousands of immortal souls. Nor were these results confined to the period in which they were achieved. All over the Continent, the Indian races have been found more accessible to Christianity from the time of the first converted tribes. There are still in Lower Canada, seven Indian villages, protected by the Government and attended by the clergy: they have schools and chapels; <sup>1</sup> they are not excluded by the

<sup>1</sup> The first priest ever ordained in Canada—and perhaps in America—of pure Indian descent is Rev. Prosper Vincent, grand son of Tsanhanwanhi, one of the four Huron chieftains who went to England and were presented to king George IV.

Another family of the same village of New Lorette,

law nor by any prejudice against them, from any calling or profession ; but to this day, where are their learned men, their men of business? We may seek them without finding one in a thousand,—if we may not better say one in ten thousand.<sup>2</sup> Yet it is well known that Indian tribes, at a distance from the settlements of the whites, if visited by a missionary a few times during the year, readily become good Christians and are most faithful to the law of God. They learn to read and write ; they know how to sing and pray;—

has furnished a student at the Laval University for the Faculty of Medicine. Four or five young girls, sisters or cousins of these two Huron educated men, have followed, with advantage, the usual course of studies at the Ursulines or at other Convents.

<sup>2</sup> The worthy missionary of the Montagnais of Sagueuay Rev. F. Arnaud, O. M. I. who has attended them as pastor for the last twenty-two years, attributes to their being well instructed in the Christian doctrine and morals, and to their unfrequent intercourse with the whites, the admirable life they lead. Sin is almost unknown to them. “How can we offend God after all He has done for us?” they say.

they ignore the vices as well as the enjoyments of civilized life, and in that ignorance find their security and their happiness. <sup>1</sup>

Our readers will not expect, then, to hear that the Ursulines succeeded, after 1668, in forming *young ladies* of the young Indian girls. No! but, in one sense, they did more;—they formed them to piety, to the virtues of our Blessed Religion; and sought not to unfit them for that state of life for which nature had formed them.

There are always exceptions to general rules:—some of the pupils, as already mentioned, were susceptible of all the polish desirable in society. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fate of the Mohegans, Pequods, Narragansets and others of the continent has been very different.

<sup>2</sup> Nous avons francisé plusieurs filles sauvages, tant Huronnes qu'Algonquines, que nous avons ensuite mariées à des Français, qui font fort bon ménage. Il y en a une, entre autres, qui sait lire et écrire en perfection, tant en sa langue Huronne,



One of the last letters that have been preserved of Mother Mary, mentions "a fine band of Indian girls, of four different nations; Iroquois, Algonquins, Abnakis, and Montagnais. "They are our consolation and our delight, she says, by their docility, rendering our labors so light that we would not exchange them for all the kingdoms of the earth." (1670)

qu'en notre Française; il n'y a personne qui la put distinguer ni se persuader qu'elle fût née sauvage. Monsieur l'Intendant Talon en a été si ravi, qu'il l'a obligée de lui écrire quelque chose en sa langue et en la nôtre pour l'emporter en France, et le faire voir comme une chose extraordinaire. *Lettres Hist.* 1668.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

1665-1671.

### THE INMATES OF THE MONASTERY AGAIN.

The residence of the Vice-Roy during nearly two years in Quebec, could not fail to furnish incidents that would be remembered in the cloister. Our old books relate some which seem to merit a place here, were it only to give a picture of life and manners. We must remember that the city itself, on the arrival of these 1200 soldiers, with five hundred workmen and some two hundred farmers with their families, contained only about seventy dwelling-houses. The principal public monuments to be visited by the strangers who had come to protect and strengthen the Colony, were the Cathedral, with the adjoining Theological Seminary of Bishop

Laval; the College of the Jesuits; the Monastery of the Ursulines, and the Hospital, or Hôtel-Dieu. As to the castle St. Louis, within the Fort, that was the residence of the Vice-Roy and his household. This veteran of seventy years, of a lofty stature and military bearing, had come to personate royalty, on these distant shores, and royalty of the time of Louis XIV.

Whenever he appeared in public, he was attended by four pages, and followed by six footmen. Twenty-four guards preceded, and officers of various grades surrounded him;—all apparelled in the bright colors of the military, or court-dresses. Let us note one occasion which called out, not only the military, but the clergy and all the citizens.

The relics of the holy martyrs, St. Felicity and St. Flavianus, had been sent to the young Church of Canada by the Holy Father; and the Bishop had ordered a public procession in their honor. The shrines enclosing the precious relics, placed on stands elegantly decorated with

drapery, lights, and flowers, were borne by four venerable priests. A sheltering canopy of scarlet and gold, was upheld by the Vice-Roy; the governor, DeCourcelles; the Intendant, Talon; and the Agent of the West India Company, Barrois. The Bishop, in pontifical robes, followed, with above forty clergymen, in surplice, chasuble and dalmatic. Next came the officers of the Vice-Roy's household; the citizens according to their rank; the long file of soldiers, in full uniform; and finally the mass of the people and the Indians. The procession paused at the church of the Ursulines, which doubtless could not contain all this multitude. The three other churches of the city, were stations, and a fifth had been prepared within the Fort.

Another day, the Cathedral was consecrated, in the midst of a similar concourse, with all the imposing ceremonies of the Roman ritual; this was in July, 1666. In the same month, at the College of the Jesuits, there was an examination; degrees

were conferred in Philosophy and Physics, in presence of the noble personages above mentioned.

But the Marquis de Tracy was not a mere passing visitor at the Ursulines; he was a sincere friend and a benefactor. For his powerful protection in a matter that regarded the temporal interests of the Community, the Ursulines owe him a lasting debt of gratitude.

In debating these questions, and on many other occasions, when the pious Vice-Roy called upon the Ursulines, he had an opportunity of appreciating those qualities that gave Mother Mary of the Incarnation such an ascendancy over all who approached her. On her part, she describes the Marquis as not less remarkable for his piety and merit, than for his rank.<sup>1</sup> His example, she says, was an

<sup>1</sup> The *Journal des Jésuites* among its amiable souvenirs, tells us, in 1666, on the Feast of St. Joseph: "The Marquis de Tracy made a general confession of all his life, and received the Holy Communion at the Ursulines. He presented three fine

inestimable advantage to society, and his zeal for the welfare of the Colony was boundless.

The Ursulines owe to the generosity of the Vice-Roy the erection of a chapel dedicated to Ste. Anne<sup>2</sup> adjoining their church, which cost him above 2,500 livres.

At his request also, their Church was consecrated by the Bishop with the same "magnificence" as the Cathedral.<sup>3</sup>

loaves of Blessed Bread, and twenty crowns for the Monastery."

<sup>2</sup> It may interest some of our readers to know that the devotion to *good St. Anne*, is ancient in the country. We read in the *Relations* 1667: "Il semble que Dieu a voulu choisir de nos jours l'Eglise de Ste. Anne du Petit-Cap, pour faire un refuge assuré aux chrétiens de ce nouveau monde. . . . . des merveilles s'y sont opérées depuis six ans."

<sup>3</sup> Mother Mary mentions the departure of the Marquis de Tracy in terms that mark both her gratitude and her esteem:

"Nous allons perdre Monsieur de Tracy. Le Roi qui le rappelle en France a envoyé un grand vaisseau de guerre pour l'emmener avec honneur. Cette nouvelle Eglise, et tout le pays y fera une perte qui ne

Passing now to the interior of the Monastery, let us view once more the inmates, and examine their labors.

Four young ladies, from 1667 to '70, had passed from the classes to the novitiate, exchanging their own for a religious name.

These were Miss Agnes Duquet, in religion Mother Agnes of the Nativity; Marie Madeleine Pinguet of the Assumption; Marie Margaret de Lauzon of St. Charles, and Charlotte Godefroy of the

se peut dire, car il a fait ici des expéditions qu'on n'aurait jamais osé entreprendre ni espérer. Dieu a voulu donner cela à la grande piété de son Serviteur, qui a gagné tout le monde par ses bonnes œuvres et par ses grands exemples de vertu et de Religion qu'il a donnés à tout le pays. Nous perdons beaucoup pour notre particulier. Il nous fait faire une Chapelle qui lui coûtera plus de deux mille cinq cents livres. C'est le meilleur ami que nous ayons eu depuis que nous sommes en ce pays. Nous souhaiterions pour le bien de l'Eglise et de tout le Canada, que Sa Majesté le voulût renvoyer. Nous prions pour cela, joignez vos prières aux nôtres. "

*Lettres Historiques.*

Blessed Sacrament. It appears that the air of Canada and the *regime* of the Monastery were specially favorable to longevity in those times:—we have here, again, four young novices, from the age of fifteen to nineteen, destined, like the preceding that we have noticed, to celebrate some their 50th and some their 60th anniversary of profession.

Another novice, admitted to her profession in 1669, was Mother LeBer of the Annunciation. Miss LeBer was born at Pitre in Normandy. Her family having sought the wilds of Canada, through motives of piety, like many others, Miss LeBer was retained in the world two years more, against her will, and only found means, at the age of twenty-six, to break the ties that bound her. She might, with some reason, complain of the long delay; but it excites a smile to see that young girl, Miss Pinguet, tired, at fifteen, of "hope deferred," putting on shoes with heels as high as could be worn, that her size may no longer be objected to by



the nuns, who seem to think her yet a child ! Sr. de Lauzon of St. Charles has another way (although she little suspects it) of proving the maturity of her virtue, if not of her years,—preferring the humblest occupations of the Monastery, serving the little Indian girls, abasing herself before all ; and, far from accepting the services of a lay Sister, as had been stipulated by her parents, she often found means to aid that Sister in the manual labor of her office.

While these good Sisters were beginning their career, an estimable lay Sister was closing hers. It was Sr. St. Laurent, whose merit we shall sufficiently make known by citing one of her last words. "I have thanked God, said she, every day of my life for having called me to the humble state of a lay Sister in an Ursuline Convent. I would not exchange it for that of a queen."

The novices, above mentioned, confided to Mother Mary of the Incarnation during the years 1667 and '9 raised the number

of the Community to twenty-two members, and others, earnestly demanded, were expected from France.

The labors of the Institute, at this period, necessarily increased with the increase of the population in the country. <sup>1</sup>

We have seen that the limits of the Monastery had been extended by the building of a church where the public were admitted, with an interior chapel for the nuns and for their pupils, leaving the apartments which had hitherto served

<sup>1</sup> De grands accroissements sont faits en ce pays depuis qu'il a plu au Roi d'y envoyer des troupes et par l'établissement de plus de trois cents familles en assez peu de temps, les mariages étant si fréquents que depuis trois ans on en a fait quatre-vingt-treize dans la seule paroisse de Québec. Plus de 400 soldats du Régiment de Carignan se sont fait habitants avec de très-avantageuses conditions.

La crainte de nos ennemis n'empêche plus nos laboureurs de faire reculer nos forêts et de charger leurs terres de toutes sortes de grains. . . . . Nos chasseurs vont bien loin en toute assurance, courir l'original, avec un profit signalé. *Relations.*

for prayer and the Holy Sacrifice, free to be employed as class-rooms or for other purposes.

The state of the seminary for the Indian girls, has been noticed in the preceding Chapter. As to the French pupils, although our catalogues were destroyed with other useful documents in the second burning of the Convent, we can, in a measure, re-establish them by the statistics of another institution in the city. It is recorded that, in 1668, the College of the Jesuits in Quebec was attended by one hundred and twenty students, sixty of them being boarders.<sup>1</sup> That same year Bishop Laval opened the classes of his Seminary for boys. It seems improbable that, in these early times of the Colony especially, there should be more boys than girls sent to school.

<sup>1</sup> Le Collège des Jésuites se maintenait depuis 30 ans; lorsqu'on y admit les jeunes hurons (1668), on y instruisait 60 pensionnaires et autant d'externes. *Hist. du Can. Ferland.*

On the other hand, Mother Mary of the Incarnation mentions, in 1668, that their pupils augment from day to day; that seven nuns are constantly occupied teaching in the French classes, while for other services there are two lay sisters. <sup>1</sup>

"Some pupils remained six or eight years, others in the short space of twelve months must be taught reading and writing, arithmetic, the Christian doctrine and morals; their prayers; in short, all that is most essential in the education of females."

<sup>1</sup> Any one who examines attentively the statements of Mother Mary of the Incarnation with regard to the care of the colonists to send their children to the Convent &c., the number of nuns employed at class &c., will perceive that in writing to France, at least in the letters preserved, she makes mention only of the pupils supported by the Convent. Others, who paid for their board, were not objects of charity and needed no particular mention. This was not the case with those whom, as she says, "she was forced to send away for want of means to keep them." Bishop Laval makes mention in his turn of the large families in the country, where there were eight, ten, twelve, and sometimes, fifteen or sixteen children.

Mother Mary may well add :—" For this end a teacher must be unremitting in her efforts to improve every moment, in order to lay a good foundation of instruction ! " Even the poorest families sent their daughters two or three months, to be prepared for their first communion. The extern pupils were numerous, but as they came to the Convent merely for the hours of class, the nuns had not the same opportunity of forming their character as they had with the boarders. <sup>1</sup> Two years later we find another remark that is not less significant. She says : " The French Colony augments sensibly ; <sup>2</sup> the great forests

<sup>1</sup> Les externes nous donnent beaucoup de travail, mais nous ne pouvons veiller sur elles comme si elles étaient en clôture. Elles sont dociles, et ont l'esprit bon, elles sont fermes dans le bien quand elles le connaissent. *Lettres de la Mère M. de l'Incarnation.*

<sup>2</sup> A glance at the statistics of the country from 1665 to 1671, shows a rapid increase of population in comparison to the preceding years.

Before the first mentioned date, there were not 2,500 Europeans in Canada : in the following year (1666) there were 3,418, of which 584 belonged to

formerly inhabited only by wild beasts, begin to be peopled by Christians.

"Our Community is composed of twenty-two nuns; our classes are filled with pupils, French and Indian."

Montreal and its environs, '60 to Three Rivers, 2,374 to Quebec and the environs. Two years later (1668), the population was 5,870.

Rev. J. B. Ferland remarks the rapid natural increase of the population in the country. In the course of the year 1671, there were nearly seven hundred children to baptize.

The population of Canada, in 1684, amounted to 17,000.

For other marks of growing prosperity in 1670, see the following:—

Pour ce qui est des affaires temporelles, le Roi fait ici de grandes dépenses; il a encore envoyé cette année cent cinquante filles et un grand nombre de soldats et d'officiers, avec des chevaux, des moutons et des chèvres pour peupler. Monsieur Talon fait exactement garder les ordres du Roi. Il a commandé qu'on fasse des chanvres, des toiles et des serges; cela a commencé, et grossira peu à peu. Il fait faire une halle à Québec, une brasserie et une tannerie à cause du nombre prodigieux de bêtes qu'il y a en ce

We have been obliged to provide other class-rooms, and our venerated Pre-late has taken the trouble to write himself to France to procure help for us. He has asked for two nuns, and has appointed a Vicar-General, one of his friends, to negotiate the matter." This demand was soon after found too low, and four were finally obtained, as will be noticed later.

Our readers, no doubt, would fain form some acquaintance with those young ladies of the "olden times";—unfortunate-

pays. Ces manufactures n'étaient point en usage par le passé en Canada, mais si elles réussissent elles diminuèrent beaucoup les grandes dépenses qu'il faut faire pour faire venir tout de France. L'on presse tant qu'on peut les femmes et les filles d'apprendre à filer. On veut que nous l'apprenions à nos Séminaristes tant Françaises que Sauvages, et on nous offre de la matière pour cela. *Lettres Hist. M. M. de l'Inc.*

After other interesting details that relate to worldly affairs, she fails not to add: "For us, our fortune is made. We are the inheritance of Jesus, and He is ours; our gains are in seeking to please Him by the practice of our rules and doing His will. Pray, that we may be enabled to do so."

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ly we have few notes beyond the brief memoirs of such as became nuns. Some traits of these have already been noticed. We might have added others:—for instance, the precocious piety of Geneviève and Anne Bourdon, placed at the Convent at the ages of six and seven;—the lovely death of Anne de Lauzon, upon whom the nuns were called to bestow their care from the age of three years. Nothing can be more beautiful than the portrait they have left us of this angelic young creature, called in her sixteenth year to enjoy the company of the angels in heaven. In consideration of her ardent desire to be admitted to the Novitiate, and at her earnest request, she was dressed for her burial as an Ursuline and laid beside the three whose graves were beneath the Chapel.

Another young lady for whom a brief memoir has been traced in our old books, for a similar reason, is Miss Marie des Moulins of Three Rivers. Confided to the nuns at the age of four, she grew up



pious, amiable, and intelligent, and seemed destined to complete the happiness of her excellent parents in the family circle ;— but God had not so ordained. At the age of fourteen, she, like her companion, Miss de Lauzon, saw death approaching, and bade him welcome. To the privilege of being waited upon by the nuns, in their Infirmary, she begged them to add that of being buried in the religious dress. Miss des Moulins also, reposes in the cemetery with the Ursulines deceased.

Other pupils of Mother Mary's time, consecrated their lives to the service of God in the Hotel-Dieu of Quebec ;—for instance, the two Misses Bourdon, Misses Marie Marguerite and Marie Madeleine Gloria : others, in the Hotel-Dieu at Montreal ; as Miss LeDuc, who had greatly edified her class-mates (1669) at the Ursulines, before returning to edify her native place by embracing the laborious life of a Hospital nun ; Miss Marie Racine had preceded Miss Le Duc in the religious state. Miss Marie Morin, the first Cana-

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dian novice received at the Hotel-Dien of Montreal, had been also a model of piety and amiable deportment while at the Ursulines, desiring above all things to be a martyr for the Faith. Before attaining her fourteenth year, she had essayed the state of life in which she persevered to the age of eighty-two ! She left her Community a lasting memorial of her piety and her talents, by writing their Annals, —a work in which she was engaged till the age of seventy-five.

Let us mention also the Misses Moyen ; one of whom, after being a captive of the Iroquois, married Major Lambert Closse, the hero of Montreal ; her sister became the wife of Capt. du Gué of the regiment of Carignan ;—Miss du Clos, daughter of the intrepid Madame du Clos, whose name is another celebrity of Montreal <sup>1</sup> was accompanied to the Ursulines by two

<sup>1</sup> For many other names of the olden times,—the " Heroic times " of Canada as they have been called, —see *Histoire des Ursulines*, Tome 1er.

of her friends Miss Saily and Miss Le Duc. <sup>1</sup>

Brief as are these notes, they give us an insight into the sealed book of the past, and enable us to form some estimate of the Institute as it was 200 years ago.

As to the qualifications of the teachers of those days, we know that our beloved Mother Mary of the Incarnation was ready to impart to the other Sisters all that could be communicated;—even in the last months of her life she had a class of young nuns around her, learning the Indian languages. She wrote several valuable treatises, for the use of the Institute, in French, besides a Sacred History in Algonquin; a Diction-

<sup>1</sup> Several Officers of the famed Regiment of Carignan-Salières, married in the country, and found "*des mariages assortis*" in the pupils of the Ursulines: for instance M. de Sorel married Catherine LeGardeur de Repentigny, of Quebec (1668); M. Berthier, — Marie LeGardeur (1672); M. Chambly — Louise de Launay; M. Verchères — Marie Perrot (1669); M. Gauthier de Varennes—Marie Boucher etc., etc.

ary and a Catechism Iroquois; a Dictionary Algonquin; a catechism in Huron; another catechism and a Prayer-book in Algonquin. She excelled in all kinds of needle-work and embroidery, as well as in painting and gilding. While she sanctified these talents by working for the Altar, and contributing to the decoration of chapels and churches all over the country, her young Sisters as well as the pupils, must have loved to take lessons and to aid her in her toils. Even in sculpture and architecture this indefatigable Mother had taken lessons,—unless we suppose her to have been self-instructed.

It was she who taught the workmen, employed to decorate the interior of the Church with architectural ornaments, guiding them for the proportions of the columns and entablature as well as in the minute details of the art.

We have mentioned that other nuns from France had been invited to join the little Community.

News reached the Monastery on the 15th September that a vessel detained at the *Ile aux Coudres*, by contrary winds, had Ursulines on board—Ursulines from “*Home!*” Several of the nuns knew what it was to be rocked for three months in one of those wooden prisons, called a mercantile vessel—not to speak of the fare and the accommodations! As the wind continued contrary they would, at least, send them refreshments—perhaps even, a smaller vessel would find its way against the wind. A little sloop was accordingly sent, with a cordial invitation to accept the protection of the good Jesuit Brother Juchereau, the pilot of the bark; and M. de Dombourg <sup>1</sup> who had generously placed himself at the head of the expedition. Sailors were hired to man the “*vessel*” and the Convent steward added to the equipment. They were strong and resolute, “*gens de cœur*”; but all their efforts to

<sup>1</sup> This M. de Dombourg was son of M. Bourdon, and brother of Mothers St. Joseph and St. Agnes.

make a prompt voyage only availed them to reach Quebec on the 19th. We need not ask if the time seemed long. It gave the voyagers time to remark the beauty of the environs,—already beginning to put on the gay colors of an autumnal landscape, the lovely Islands among which they were detained; *l'Ile-aux-Coudres*, *Ile-aux-Oies*,—inhabited even then; the fertile Island of Orleans with its pleasant farm-houses: all along the shores of the St. Lawrence they had seen villages and hamlets,<sup>1</sup> where thirty years before dark forests frowned.

Let us meet now upon the wharf, where thirty-two years ago, our first Ursulines landed, that missionary band, so long and

<sup>1</sup> "Il fait beau voir à présent (1667) les rivages de notre fleuve St. Laurent; de nouvelles colonies vont s'étendant sur plus de 80 lieues le long des bords de cette grande Rivière; où l'on voit naître d'espace en espace de nouvelles Bourgades qui facilitent la navigation, la rendant plus agréable par la vue de quantité de maisons, et plus commode par de fréquent lieux de repos." *Relation*.

anxiously expected. Of these four French ladies, wearing the black robe of the Ursuline, two are from the monastery of Bourges ;—Mother Marie Drouet, of Jesus, nineteen years professed ; and Marie Gibault du Breuil, of St. Joseph, four years professed. Two others are from the “great Convent” of Paris ; it is Mother Marie Le Maire, of the Angels, once a rich Parisian Lady ; the other is a lay sister, Mary Dieu of the Resurrection.

Great was the rejoicing in the cloistered family on receiving this desired accession to their number,—not mere young girls, to be formed to the religious life ; but persons of mature years, trained in the most fervent Communities, and ready now for any labor. Such were the persons demanded by Bishop Laval, by Mother Mary of the Incarnation and Mother St. Athanasius. The latter, about 50 years old was still hale and vigorous ; the former was passed “three score and ten.”

Mothers St. Croix and St. Clair, who had aided in governing the house for the

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last thirty years, in the office of Assistant, were not younger. The rest of the Community, as we have seen, were mostly young.

Without anticipating upon the future career of usefulness of these three Mothers, we shall merely say that all passed long years in the Superiority, and not only contributed to the prosperity of the Monastery they had come to aid, but founded and governed long that of Three Rivers.

Our missionary band, while we have discussed their merits, have been introduced to their new Sisters. We shall not attempt to describe the scene.<sup>1</sup> The two Parisians find one from their own Monastery at the head of the Community, — Rev. Mother St. Athanasius, in place of the recent Superioress, Mother Mary of the Incarnation, who is now charged with the Novitiate. The other members are all known to our readers, or soon will be.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Elles furent accueillies dans notre Communauté avec des sentiments de joie qui se peuvent bien sentir, mais non s'exprimer. *Vieux Récit.*

<sup>2</sup> See List, at the end of present Chapter.



The pupils, as is usual on such occasions, took an active part in the welcoming.

A few days later they comply with a general custom, a sort of by-law for the two Communities on similar occasions, and visit the good Hospital nuns of the Hotel-Dieu. They do not find a numerous, but a fervent, happy Community continuing the labors, and emulating the bright examples of their first foundresses.

Our voyagers had also to acquit themselves of a pious vow. This took them, still accompanied by the amiable Madame de la Peltrie, to the statue of the Blessed Virgin, honored in the Chapel of Notre Dame de Foye. They would not, of course, fail to visit this much-talked-of Huron village, where Father Chaumonot attends with assiduous care, his beloved exiles <sup>1</sup> now reduced to 150 souls. The

<sup>1</sup> After the Hurons were attacked on Isle of Orleans, by the Mohawks in 1656, a part of them voluntarily emigrated to the country of their enemy, and became incorporated with them: such was the custom of these nations. The remainder were trans-

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aged Dogique, passed his eightieth year, was there, ready to harangue the "Holy Virgins" in his most picturesque style, and all these good Christians invoked upon them a thousand blessings.

Had our voyagers postponed this visit a few weeks, they might have witnessed an edifying spectacle.

At the commencement of Advent, Mother Mary of the Incarnation sent the worthy Dogique a wax-figure of the Infant Jesus.<sup>1</sup> These simple-hearted people

ported to Quebec, and lodged in a Fort (on the margin of Mountain Hill) built for them till peace was restored in 1666; when they removed about five miles from the city, and founded the mission of Notre Dame de Foye. Some twenty five years later they removed to Lorette, 12 miles north of Quebec.

<sup>1</sup> This devotion of the Christian Hurons is so edifying that we transcribe an extract from the account in the *Relation*.

"La Révérende Mère Marie de l'Incarnation fit au commencement de l'Avent, un présent au premier Dogique de la petite Eglise Huronne, Louis Taondechoren, d'une belle Image de cire en relief du saint Enfant Jésus, dans son berceau. Ce bon Sauvage

received it as a present from heaven. Each poor cabin became, in turn, a

en témoigna plus de reconnaissance, que si on lui eut donné tous les trésors du monde. Toute la Bourgade prit part à sa joie, et regarda cette sainte Image, quoique donnée à un particulier, comme un bien commun et comme un présent envoyé du Ciel. Ils prirent la pensée d'offrir les honneurs qu'ils rendraient à cette sainte image, en réparation de la mauvaise réception que les Juifs firent à l'Enfant Jésus, quand il vint au monde. Le Père qui les vit dans ces bons sentiments, les assura que cette dévotion attirerait sur eux mille bénédictions du Ciel. Il leur donna une semaine entière pour se préparer à recevoir l'Image dans leurs Cabanes : cette semaine se passa dans un redoublement de ferveur . . . Le jour destiné à commencer cette dévotion étant venu, après le chant du *Veni Creator*, on tira au sort . . . Le premier billet était marqué du nom d'une bonne veuve, qui à cette nouvelle pensa mourir de joie . . .

En un moment tout fut prêt, sa cabane bien nette, un petit Autel fort propre, avec son dais, orné de tout ce qu'elle avait pu trouver de beau pour recevoir un tel hôte. Car elle était bien persuadée que ce choix était un coup du Ciel, et une marque d'une Providence particulière de Notre Seigneur sur elle et sur toute sa famille. La sainte Image y ayant été portée comme en Procession et posée sur l'Autel, le Père leur fit faire une prière pour saluer leur hôte,

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chapel, while from week to week their  
devotions were prolonged and their acts

et lui offrir tout ce qu'ils avaient, leurs biens, leurs  
personnes et leur vie, et à la fin ils se mirent tous  
à chanter des Noël's en leur langue en l'honneur du  
saint Enfant Jésus, ce qu'ils continuèrent tous les  
jours suivants à leurs petits saluts du soir.".....

Cette image du Saint Enfant Jésus, changeant  
chaque semaine de cabane, en la manière que j'ai  
dit, jusques à la fête de la Purification, chacun par  
une sainte jalousie prenait plaisir à lui préparer un  
reposoir toujours plus magnifique, trouvait de nou-  
velles inventions pour le garantir de la fumée. Cette  
dévotion fit des biens incroyables partout; la mo-  
destie et la retenue de ceux de la cabane qui jouissait  
de ce bonheur, était si grande, que pendant ce temps-  
là, on s'y comportait à peu près comme dans une  
église; les saluts s'y faisaient régulièrement tous les  
soirs, même en l'absence du Père; les petits aussi  
bien que les grands y assistaient sans y manquer, et  
après les prières communes, qu'ils récitaient tous à  
haute voix à l'heure ordinaire, ils chantaient alter-  
nativement, les hommes et les petits garçons d'un  
côté, et les femmes et les filles de l'autre, des can-  
tiques et des Hymnes en leur langue, sur le Mystère  
de la naissance du Fils de Dieu; leur manière de  
chanter était si agréable et si dévote, que les Fran-  
çais qui demeurent aux environs, et quelques uns

of virtue, till the Feast of the Purification closed the Christmas-tide.

In the hamlet of Sillery, our travellers heard the good Algonquins and Montagnais in their devout chapel, entone, as they had done thirty-two years before, sweet hymns that moved strangely the hearts of these French ladies. Yet what ravages sickness <sup>1</sup> has made in this once flourishing mission! The poor Indians are but a handful, compared to former

même dans des habitations assez éloignées, les écoutaient avec admiration et en étaient touchés. Les plus éclairés d'entr' eux remarquèrent un si grand changement dans les familles. qui avaient reçu chez elles l'Image du Saint Enfant Jésus, que quand ils s'apercevaient de quelque désordre dans une famille, ils souhaitaient aussitôt et procuraient selon leur pouvoir, qu'on y portât la sainte Image: C'est ce que fit leur Capitaine.

<sup>3</sup> La petite vérole a depuis un an furieusement désolé cette petite colonie.—Les Algonquins et les Montagnais en sont quasi tous morts. *Rel.* 1670.

From this period Sillery became an Abenaki mission, until a new site was found for them in 1683, at the falls of the Chaudière, south of Quebec.

times, when Madame de la Peltrie, had seen happy groups of romping children, follow her, their *Ningay*, more fondly than their own mothers. But the kind-hearted, generous lady, who had done much for Sillery, only to feel her heart swell with the wish of doing more, visits to-day her poor Indians, her dear ancient seminarists, for the last time. Did her good angel whisper to her that she would return no more? or did the good squaws with tearful eyes, follow wistfully the receding figure of their pious benefactress as she disappeared with the "Holy Virgins," for the last time from their hamlet?

But let us not delay our narrative to conjecture.—Madame de la Peltrie conducts the good nuns back to the Convent; they have come to labor, and we shall find them engaged, at once, in teaching the French classes, while they take lessons from Mother Mary of the Incarnation in the Indian languages. The following list will show us their companions.

After naming *Madame de la Peltrie*, we place

A LIST OF THE CHOIR NUNS, IN 1671.

[PROFESSED IN FRANCE.]

ARRIVAL.

Ven. Mother Mary Guyart of the Incarnation.	1639
Rev. Mother Cecile Richer of St. Croix .....	1639
— Anne Le Bugle of St. Clare. ...	1640
— Margaret de Flecelles of St. Athanasius .....	1640
— Anne Le Boue of Our Lady.....	1644
— Mary de Villiers of St. Andrew..	1657
— Mary du Breuil of St. Joseph.....	1671
— Mary Dronet of Jesus.....	1671
— Mary Le Maire of the Angels....	1671

[Professed in the Monastery.]

PROFESSION.

— Charlotte Barré of St. Ignatius..	1648
— Philippa de Boulogne of St. Dominic. ....	1650
— Mary Geneviève Bourdon of St. Joseph... ..	1654
— Anne Bourdon of St. Agnes.....	1660
— Mary Bontet of St. Augustin ...	1661
— Jane Louise Godefroy of St. John the Evangelist.....	1668
— Mary Angelica Poisson of St. Francis Xavier.. ..	1668
— Agnes Duguet of the Nativity....	1669

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GLIMPSES OF THE MONASTERY.

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PROFESSION.

Rev. Mother Mary Magdalen Pinguet of the  
Assumption ..... 1669  
— — Mary-Charlotte Godefroy of the  
B. Sacrament ..... 1669  
— — Mary LeBer of the Annunciation. 1670  
— — Mary Magdalen de Lauzon of St.  
Charles..... 1672

*Lay Sisters.*

Sr. Catherine Lezeau of St. Ursula ..... 1648  
— Frances Ouën of St. Magdalen ..... 1655  
— Antoinette Makinon of St. Martha..... 1659  
— Mary Dodier of the Passion..... 1660  
— Mary Dieu of the Resurrection [from Paris] 1671



## CHAPTER XV.

**1671-1672.**

### THE CLOSE OF WELL-SPENT YEARS.

The rejoicings with which the nuns newly arrived from France, had been received, had hardly subsided to the calm of daily life, when a cloud arose to overshadow the Monastery with sorrow. The " favors " solicited had been granted :— Heaven now demanded a sacrifice, as unlooked for, as it was afflictive. Death had marked a victim : it was the good Foundress, who had lived with her beloved Ursulines, sharing their poverty and their labors, practising, in their midst, those sweet virtues of humility, gentleness and mortification, which endeared her to them even more than her generous donations in their favor.

It was early in November when Madame de la Peltrie was struck with her last illness. Seven days were a short space for the nuns to prepare to lose her; but to the pious lady herself, the summons brought no terror. She had no sooner been warned that her malady, a violent attack of pleurisy, would terminate her life, than she occupied herself in regulating her temporal affairs, in order to have done with the things of this world. The Royal Intendant, Talon, was present, with the other functionaries necessary, at the signing of her will. She took her leave of him, expressing her thanks for his visit with as much ease and presence of mind, as if the occasion had been an ordinary occurrence. The last Sacraments, administered by the Grand Vicar, M. de Bernières, were to her a source of abundant strength and consolation. Seeing the nuns in sorrow, surrounding her with affectionate solicitude, and seeking by a thousand delicate attentions to procure her some alleviation in her sufferings, she

appeared sensibly affected ; and declared, like the dying Mother St, Joseph, that God had given her the promised hundred-fold in this life, for all that she had abandoned for His love.

As life ebbed slowly away, the hours seemed long to her, in her ardent desires to be forever united to her God, and often she repeated the words of the sacred Psalmist : " *Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi : in domum Domini ibimus :—I rejoice in the words that have been said unto me, I shall go into the House of the Lord.*"

These words were accomplished in her on the evening of the 19th November, 1671, leaving her spiritual daughters saddened by her loss, yet consoled by a close of life, so tranquil, so full of sweetness.

Madame de la Peltrie was sixty-eight years of age ; but the vivacity of the French character, and the healthful influence of such occupations as hers had been,—exercises of piety and good works,—are a

great preservative against the ravages of time. No one had ever thought she was growing old. The good nuns now missed their companion and friend, whose unobtrusive virtues had been an unfailing source of edification; while to the poor, and to the missions, she had been a constant and generous benefactress.

Her funeral obsequies were attended by the Governor and all the distinguished persons of the city, as well as of the neighboring hamlets. Her loss was universally deplored; nor were the poor Indians the last in their demonstrations of sorrow.

Our venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation had assisted her companion at the hour of her departure from this world; she seemed to have outlived her only to console her sisters, and to animate them by her own example of perfect resignation to the will of Heaven. Alas! another and a greater sacrifice would soon be demanded of them. Early in January a serious malady threatened the precious life of that beloved Mother, for whom

each of the nuns would have gladly given her own.

Overwhelmed with grief, they besought Heaven to spare them the dreaded sacrifice, and the venerable patient, unable to refuse them this consolation joined in their petitions so far as to say : " My God, if I may yet be of service to this little community, I do not refuse the labor nor the fatigue : thy will be done."—"No, my good Mother, that is not enough, urged the kind Father Lalemant, you must join our petitions, and ask to recover." Ever obedient, she fulfilled the injunction. Thus was obtained a few weeks' respite;—but it was only a delay. The bilious affection from which she had suffered severely for eight years past, with a few intervals of comparative health, had impaired her naturally strong constitution, and the hour was at hand when it must fail altogether.

During Holy Week, in the month of April, the venerable Mother was obliged once more to suffer herself to be conduct-

ed to the Infirmary. Her sufferings, which were intense, only served to unite her soul more closely to God.—“*Christo confixa sum cruci.*” “I am crucified with Jesus on the Cross.”—These words were not a complaint, but the expression of the joy of her heart. On the 29th of April she received the Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, entering from that moment into so intimate a communication with God that she seemed no longer of earth. While her dear Sisters, overcome with tender sorrow, surrounded the dying saint, her tranquil aspect inspired them with higher thoughts; that weary pillow seemed the porch of heaven. Visitors, allowed to enter to behold a spectacle so impressive, spoke low, and stayed the *farewell* they had prepared to utter.

Mother St. Athanasius, whose grief, intensified by that of each of her Sisters, rendered her the more thoughtful of all who, with her, would soon mourn their dearest friend, reminded her of her son, and asked a message for him. Mother Mary of the

Incarnation, recalled a moment to earth by maternal love, answered with emotion : " Tell him that I bear him away with me in my heart : in heaven I will ask for his perfect sanctification."

Already, several times, the boarders, French and Indian, had knelt around her to receive her blessing. On the morning of the day of her death, having asked to see once more her dear seminarists, she spoke to them admirably in their own language, on the beauty of the Christian doctrine, and the happiness of serving God, and gave them, with effusion, her last blessing.

From noon to six o'clock in the evening, she remained absorbed in God, speechless, yet conscious, awaiting in peace the moment of her departure. The nuns kneeling beside their dying Mother and friend, felt the tranquillizing influence of those marks of predestination, which transformed the chamber of death to a sanctuary.

The 30th of April was drawing to a close, when the venerable Mother hearing the summons: "Come, faithful soul! enter into the joy of thy God,"—opens her dying eyes upon her beloved Sisters with a look full of love, as if to bless them and say—"Adieu."—One feeble sigh was heard,—life was over;—the spirit, disenthralled, had sped on wings of love to the bosom of its God.

That moment, so overwhelming to surviving friends, when suspense has yielded to certainty, and we become conscious that, while waiting for the last sigh, we were still nourishing a secret hope that life would be prolonged, was not one of unmingled grief. A ray of immortality seemed to illuminate the features of the departed, and celestial consolations inundated the hearts of those who wept an irreparable loss. The venerable Mother had expired, aged seventy-two years, <sup>2</sup> thirty-three of which had been spent in Canada.

The intelligence of her decease was re-

<sup>2</sup> She was born Oct. 28th 1599.



ceived in the city and throughout the Colony with sentiments that corresponded to the universal esteem in which she was held, and the gratitude which almost every family owed her.

On the day of her burial, that veteran of the sanctuary, Father Lalemant, now seventy-nine years of age, made the panegyric of the deceased, applying to her the attributes of the valiant woman, as depicted in Scripture. The church was thronged with a dense concourse. In the midst of the mourners, as all the audience might be called, were the Governor De Courcelles and the Royal Intendant. It was at their request that the coffin was not lowered into the grave before an artist had been employed to transfer to canvas, if possible, some trace of that celestial beauty which struck the beholders with veneration.

Our readers will not expect to find here any thing resembling a biographical notice of Ven. Mother Marie de l'Incarnation. The bare enumeration of her re-

markable qualities, the heroic virtues, the marvels of grace that constituted her interior life, and which have made her, according to Bossuet, the Teresa of the New World, would lead us far, without being satisfactory.

Our purpose in this little work has been, to trace her principal labors in the accomplishment of that special embassy which concerned the spiritual, as well as the temporal, well-being of so many thousands of souls in Canada, and to leave our readers to draw their own conclusions. It would be easy to point out her wonderful and versatile talents; the thoroughness of her character; her unerring and enlightened judgment; the extraordinary powers of her well-balanced mind. At the same time we might revert to her spirit of self-sacrifice, of utter reliance upon Providence, which was only equalled by her vast charity, and her insatiable zeal for the salvation of souls.

The wonderful extension of the Faith during the last years of her life, consoled

her in proportion to the interior martyrdom she had suffered while she saw the efforts of the missionaries baffled, and the salvation of the poor pagans retarded.

Christianity was now triumphant throughout the land; and, if she, in her humility, considered herself and her Community as a mere *grain of sand* in the foundations of the Church of Canada,—the object of her solicitude, and of her burning zeal,—by others her labors and her success, were appreciated differently.

The illustrious Bishop Laval has written her eulogium, from which we cite one passage;—"Mother Mary of the Incarnation, having been chosen by God to establish the Order of St. Ursula in Canada, was endowed with the plenitude of the spirit of that holy Institute. She was a perfect Superioress, an excellent Mistress of Novices, and was well qualified for all the offices in a religious Community. Her life, which interiorly was all divine, was so well regulated exteriorly that she was a living rule for her Sisters.

Her zeal for the salvation of souls, and especially for that of the poor Indians, was so ardent that she seemed to embrace them all within her heart. We have no doubt that to her prayers are due, in a great measure, the blessings which the Church of Canada now enjoys."

Charlevoix, who wrote her life about fifty years after her decease says, that, "History presents us few women to be compared to her" Of her writings he declares:—" They prove her to have been one of the most intelligent women of that century. Every thing is solid in her writings: the thoughts are just; her assertions never hazarded; her manner is original, and her style is marked by that noble simplicity which few writers attain."

We cannot take our leave of the subject without allowing our readers to hear how the decease of Mother Mary of the Incarnation and of Madame de la Peltrie, was announced in the Relation of 1672. The writer, Rev. Father LeMercier, opens

a biographical notice of thirty columns in the following terms:—

“The death of those two illustrious persons is a public affliction. They were venerated for their virtue and holiness; but they were especially cherished and esteemed for having founded an Institution for the instruction of female youth, both French and Indian, thereby contributing greatly to the solid establishment and progress of the Colony of New France. These two holy souls burned with the same zeal and had no other object in view but to live and die in the love of God, and at the peril of their lives, to cause Him to be known and loved by the people of this New World.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Two years previous, the same Rev. Father had written: It is an inestimable happiness for Canada to have possessed since thirty years the religious Houses of the Ursulines and the Hospital nuns. These two institutions were necessary here, and the nuns have acquitted themselves with honor and with merit of all that God or man could demand of them in the discharge of the duties of their respective callings.

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the nuns have  
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ive callings.

## CONTENTS.

(VOL. I.)

—

PREFACE, p. 3.

### CHAPTER I.

INSTRUCTION NEEDED IN NEW FRANCE.

Quebec before 1639, *p.* 9.—Interest in the Missions, 14.—Indian girls, and daughters of the settlers, 15.

### CHAPTER II.

THE WAYS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

Who was Mother Marie Guyart of the Incarnation, *p.* 16.—Her apostolic spirit, 18—Her call to found a Convent in Canada, 21—Madame de la Peltrie, 23—Her project approved, 25—Another missionary Ursuline, 26.—The Archbishop of Tours blesses the foundresses, 27.—Paris, Dieppe; Mother Cecile de la Croix, 28.—The departure, 29.

### CHAPTER III.

ARRIVAL OF THE URSULINES IN CANADA.

The harbor of Tadoussac, *p.* 31.—First night on land, 33.—The reception, 35.—A visit to the Indian hamlet, 37.—The Hospital Nuns and the Ursulines part, 40.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THREE YEARS' LABORS.

Study of the Indian languages, *p.* 41.—“The Louvre,” 42.—Malady among the “*Seminarists*,” 44.—Nuns from Paris, 46.—What they write of the Convent, 47.—Difficulties, 50.—Foundation-stone of the Monastery laid, 52.

## CHAPTER V.

## MADAME DE LA PELTRIE AND THE INDIANS.

The foundress boards with the Nuns, *p.* 54.—A procession, 55.—The Indian Council, 56.—An excursion to Sillery, 59.—Midnight Mass at the Indian Chapel, 62.

## CHAPTER VI.

## EFFECTS OF INSTRUCTION.

The Indian girls at home, *p.* 61.—In the Convent, 65.—Preparing for first Communion, 68.—Their gratitude, 70.—Teresa the Huron, 71.—The *Seminarists* among their own people, 75.

## CHAPTER VII.

## EIGHT YEARS IN THE NEW MONASTERY.

Progress of Christianity, *p.* 78.—The Monastery in readiness, 79.—The Nuns take possession, the first Mass, 82.—*Seminarists* and Indian women, 86.—Parlor visitors, 87.—Labors of seven Nuns, 90.—Mother Mary's spirit, 91.—Madame de la Peltrie aids in the Convent, 93.—Other laborers arrive, 95.—Mother St. Athanasius Superior, 96.—Miss de Boulogne, 97.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## MOTHER ST. JOSEPH AND THE HURONS.

The Huron braves visit Quebec, *p.* 98.—Their reports, 100.—The *Mother* of the Hurons and her neophytes, 101.—The Iroquois destroy the Huron country, 105.—The remnants of the tribe at Quebec, 107.

## CHAPTER IX.

## ONE NIGHT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

An evening scene, *p.* 109.—The alarm of fire, 114.—Were all safe? 117.—Hospitality offered, 120.—The ruins, 121.—A visit of condolence, 123.—The Indian harangue, 124.

## CHAPTER X.

## COURAGE IN ADVERSITY.

Invitation to return to France, *p.* 128.—Resolution of the Nuns, 130.—Their poverty; charity of the colonists, 133.—The foundation-stone laid again, 134.—Illness of Mother St. Joseph, 137.—Her dying message, 139.—Brief Obituary, 141.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE SECOND MONASTERY.

The Nuns remove to their new Convent, *p.* 146.—The number of scholars augment, 149.—Education of the times, 150.—“Good *Seminarists*,” 151.—Lodgings of the first Bishop of Quebec, 154.—Madame de la Peltrie’s Church, 155.—Mother Mary of the Incarnation’s labors, 158.



## CHAPTER XII.

## THE NOVITIATE.

The secret of a religious vocation, *p.* 159.—The Misses Bourdon, novices, 162.—Miss Boutet and Miss Godefroy, 165.—Miss Angelique Poisson of Gentilly, 168.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE URSULINES AND THE IROQUOIS.

Ambassadors at the Convent, *p.* 170.—The female Sachem, 171.—The Convent a fortress, 175.—Intrepidity, 179.—Attempt to *civilize* the Indians, 185.—Opinion of Mother Mary of the Incarnation, 188.—Experience, 190.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE INMATES OF THE MONASTERY AGAIN.

A picture of life and manners, *p.* 195.—The Ursulines and the Marquis de Tracy, 198.—New candidates for the Novitiate, 200.—Instruction, 203.—Souvenirs of the pupils, 209.—Ursulines from *Home*, 214.—Their reception, 216.—Their visits, 218.—List of the Nuns in 1671, 224.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE CLOSE OF WELL-SPENT YEARS.

Sad illness of Madame de la Peltrie, *p.* 226.—Her death, 228.—Another greater sacrifice, 229.—Last moments of Venerable Mother Marie de l'Incarnation, 232.—Her burial, 234.—Appreciations of her character, 236.

p. 159.—The  
Boutet and  
Poisson of

POIS.

—The female  
175.—Intre-  
ndians, 185.  
nation, 188.

AGAIN.

—The Ursu-  
New candi-  
ion, 203.—  
from *Home*,  
, 218.—List.

RS.

226.—Her  
229.—Last  
P'Incarna-  
ions of her

